









Edition De Luxe

WORKS OF
VICTOR HUGO

Volume 9



P O E M S

DRAMAS

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POEMS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY VARIOUS AUTHORS,

NOW FIRST COLLECTED BY

HENRY LLEWELLYN WILLIAMS



VICTOR in Poesy, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France!

TENNYSON.

Thou art chief of us, and lord;
Thy song is as a sword
Keen-edged and scented in the blade with flowers.
A. C. SWINBURNE.



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EARLY POEMS

MOSES ON THE NILE

(“ *Mes sœurs, l’onde est plus fraîche.*”)

“**S**ISTERS! the wave is freshest in the ray
Of the young morning; the reapers are asleep;
The river bank is lonely: come away!
The early murmurs of old Memphis creep
Faint on my ear; and here unseen we stray,—
Deep in the covert of the grove withdrawn,
Save by the dewy eye-glance of the dawn.

“Within my father’s palace, fair to see,
Shine all the Arts, but oh! this river side,
Pranked with gay flowers, is dearer far to me
Than gold and porphyry vases bright and wide;
How glad in heaven the song-bird carols free!
Sweeter these zephyrs float than all the showers
Of costly odours in our royal bowers.

“The sky is pure, the sparkling stream is clear:
Unloose your zones, my maidens! and fling down
To float awhile upon these bushes near
Your blue transparent robes: take off my crown,
And take away my jealous veil; for here
To-day we shall be joyous while we lave
Our limbs amid the murmur of the wave.

- “Hasten; but through the fleecy mists of morn,
What do I see? Look ye along the stream!
Nay, timid maidens — we must not return!
Coursing along the current, it would seem
An ancient palm-tree to the deep sea borne,
That from the distant wilderness proceeds,
Downwards, to view our wondrous Pyramids.
- “But stay! if I may surely trust mine eye,—
It is the bark of Hermes, or the shell
Of Iris, wafted gently to the sighs
Of the light breeze along the rippling swell;
But no: it is a skiff where sweetly lies
An infant slumbering, and his peaceful rest
Looks as if pillowed on his mother’s breast.
- “He sleeps — oh, see! his little floating bed
Swims on the mighty river’s fickle flow,
A white dove’s nest; and there at hazard led
By the faint winds, and wandering to and fro,
The cot comes down; beneath his quiet head
The gulfs are moving, and each threatening wave
Appears to rock the child upon a grave.
- “He wakes — ah, maids of Memphis! haste, oh, haste!
He cries! alas! — What mother could confide
Her offspring to the wild and watery waste?
He stretches out his arms, the rippling tide
Murmurs around him, where all rudely placed,
He rests but with a few frail reeds beneath,
Between such helpless innocence and death.
- “Oh! take him up! Perchance he is of those
Dark sons of Israel whom my sire proscribes;
Ah! cruel was the mandate that arose
Against most guiltless of the stranger tribes!
Poor child! my heart is yearning for his woes,
I would I were his mother; but I’ll give
If not his birth, at least the claim to live.”

Thus Iphis spoke; the royal hope and pride
Of a great monarch; while her damsels nigh,
Wandered along the Nile's meandering side;
And these diminished beauties, standing by
The trembling mother; watching with eyes wide
Their graceful mistress, admired her as stood,
More lovely than the genius of the flood!

The waters broken by her delicate feet
Receive the eager wader, as alone
By gentlest pity led, she strives to meet
The wakened babe; and, see, the prize is won!
She holds the weeping burden with a sweet
And virgin glow of pride upon her brow,
That knew no flush save modesty's till now.

Opening with cautious hands the reedy couch,
She brought the rescued infant slowly out
Beyond the humid sands; at her approach
Her curious maidens hurried round about
To kiss the new-born brow with gentlest touch;
Greeting the child with smiles, and bending nigh
Their faces o'er his large, astonished eye!

Haste thou who, from afar, in doubt and fear,
Dost watch, with straining eyes, the fated boy —
The loved of heaven! come like a stranger near,
And clasp young Moses with maternal joy;
Nor fear the speechless transport and the tear
Will e'er betray thy fond and hidden claim,
For Iphis knows not yet a mother's name!

With a glad heart, and a triumphal face,
The princess to the haughty Pharaoh led
The humble infant of a hated race,
Bathed with the bitter tears a parent shed;
While loudly pealing round the holy place
Of Heaven's white Throne, the voice of angel choirs
Intoned the theme of their undying lyres!

“No longer mourn thy pilgrimage below —
 O Jacob! let thy tears no longer swell
 The torrent of the Egyptian river: Lo!
 Soon on the Jordan's banks thy tents shall dwell;
 And Goshen shall behold thy people go
 Despite the power of Egypt's law and brand,
 From their sad thrall to Canaan's promised land.

“The King of Plagues, the Chosen of Sinai,
 Is he that, o'er the rushing waters driven,
 A vigorous hand hath rescued for the sky;
 Ye whose proud hearts disown the ways of heaven!
 Attend, be humble! for its power is nigh:
 Israel! a cradle shall redeem thy worth —
 A Cradle yet shall save the widespread earth!”
Dublin University Magazine, 1839.

ENVY AND AVARICE

(“*L'Avarice et l'Envie.*”)

ENVY and Avarice, one summer day,
 Sauntering abroad
 In quest of the abode
 Of some poor wretch or fool who lived that way —
 You — or myself, perhaps — I cannot say —
 Along the road, scarce heeding where it tended,
 Their way in sullen, sulky silence wended;
 For, though twin sisters, these two charming creatures,
 Rivals in hideousness of form and features,
 Wasted no love between them as they went.
 Pale Avarice,
 With gloating eyes,
 And back and shoulders almost double bent,
 Was hugging close that fatal box

For which she's ever on the watch
 Some glance to catch
 Suspiciously directed to its locks;
 And Envy, too, no doubt with silent winking
 At her green, greedy orbs, no single minute
 Withdrawn from it, was hard a-thinking
 Of all the shining dollars in it.

The only words that Avarice could utter,
 Her constant doom, in a low, frightened mutter,
 "There's not enough, enough, yet in my store!"
 While Envy, as she scanned the glittering sight,
 Groaned as she gnashed her yellow teeth with spite,
 "She's more than me, more, still forever more!"

Thus, each in her own fashion, as they wandered,
 Upon the coffer's precious contents pondered,
 When suddenly, to their surprise,
 The God Desire stood before their eyes.
 Desire, that courteous deity who grants
 All wishes, prayers, and wants;
 Said he to the two sisters: "Beauteous ladies,
 As I'm a gentleman, my task and trade is
 To be the slave of your behest —
 Choose therefore at your own sweet will and pleasure,
 Honours or treasure!
 Or in one word, whatever you'd like best.
 But, let us understand each other — she
 Who speaks the first, her prayer shall certainly
 Receive — the other, the same boon *redoubled!*"

Imagine how our amiable pair,
 At this proposal, all so frank and fair,
 Were mutually troubled!
 Misers and enviers, of our human race,
 Say, what would you have done in such a case?
 Each of the sisters murmured, sad and low:

“What boots it, oh, Desire, to me to have
Crowns, treasures, all the goods that heart can crave,
Or power divine bestow,
Since still another must have always more?”

So each, lest she should speak before
The other, hesitating slow and long
Till the god lost all patience, held her tongue.
He was enraged, in such a way,
To be kept waiting there all day,
With two such beauties in the public road;
Scarce able to be civil even,
He wished them both — well, not in heaven.

Envy at last the silence broke,
And smiling, with malignant sneer;
Upon her sister dear,
Who stood in expectation by,
Ever implacable and cruel, spoke:
“I would be blinded of *one* eye?”

American Keepsake.

ODES.—1818-'28

KING LOUIS XVII

(*"En ce temps-là du ciel les portes."*)

THE golden gates were opened wide that day,
All through the unveiled heaven there seemed to play
Out of the Holiest of Holy, light;
And the elect beheld, crowd immortal,
A young soul, led up by young angels bright,
Stand in the starry portal.

A fair child fleeing from the world's fierce hate,
In his blue eye the shade of sorrow sate,
His golden hair hung all dishevelled down,
On wasted cheeks that told a mournful story,
And angels twined him with the innocent's crown,
The martyr's palm of glory.

The virgin souls that to the Lamb are near,
Called through the clouds with voices heavenly clear,
God hath prepared a glory for thy brow,
Rest in his arms, and all ye hosts that sing
His praises ever on untired string,
Chant, for a mortal comes among ye now;
Do homage—" 'Tis a king."

And the pale shadow saith to God in heaven:
"I am an orphan and no king at all;
I was a weary prisoner yestereven,
My father's murderers fed my soul with gall.

Not me, O Lord, the regal name beseems.
Last night I fell asleep in dungeon drear,
But then I saw my mother in my dreams,
Say, shall I find her here? ”

The angels said: “ Thy Saviour bids thee come,
Out of an impure world He calls thee home,
From the mad earth, where horrid murder waves
Over the broken cross her impure wings,
And regicides go down among the graves,
Scenting the blood of kings.”

He cries: “ Then have I finished my long life?
Are all its evils over, all its strife,
And will no cruel gaoler evermore
Wake me to pain, this blissful vision o’er?
Is it no dream that nothing else remains
Of all my torments but this answered cry,
And have I had, O God, amid my chains,
The happiness to die?

“ For none can tell what cause I had to pine,
What pangs, what miseries, each day were mine;
And when I wept there was no mother near
To soothe my cries, and smile away my tear.
Poor victim of a punishment unending,
Torn like a sapling from its mother earth,
So young, I could not tell what crime impending
Had stained me from my birth.

“ Yet far off in dim memory it seems,
With all its horror mingled happy dreams,
Strange cries of glory rocked my sleeping head,
And a glad people watched beside my bed.
One day into mysterious darkness thrown,
I saw the promise of my future close;
I was a little child, left all alone,
Alas! and I had foes.

“They cast me living in a dreary tomb,
Never mine eyes saw sunlight pierce the gloom,
Only ye, brother angels, used to sweep
Down from your heaven, and visit me in sleep.
'Neath blood-red hands my young life withered there.
Dear Lord, the bad are miserable all,
Be not Thou deaf, like them, unto my prayer,
It is for them I call.”

The angels sang: “See heaven's high arch unfold,
Come, we will crown thee with the stars above,
Will give thee cherub-wings of blue and gold,
And thou shalt learn our ministry of love,
Shalt rock the cradle where some mother's tears
Are dropping o'er her restless little one,
Or, with thy luminous breath, in distant spheres,
Shalt kindle some cold sun.”

Ceased the full choir, all heaven was hushed to hear,
Bowed the fair face, still wet with many a tear,
In depths of space, the rolling worlds were stayed,
Whilst the Eternal in the infinite said:

“O king, I kept thee far from human state,
Who hadst a dungeon only for thy throne,
O son, rejoice, and bless thy bitter fate,
The slavery of kings thou hast not known,
What if thy wasted arms are bleeding yet,
And wounded with the fetter's cruel trace,
No earthly diadem has ever set
A stain upon thy face.

“Child, life and hope were with thee at thy birth,
But life soon bowed thy tender form to earth,
And hope forsook thee in thy hour of need.
Come, for thy Saviour had His pains divine;
Come, for His brow was crowned with thorns like thine,
His sceptre was a reed.”

Dublin University Magazine.

THE FEAST OF FREEDOM

(*"Lorsqu'à l'antique Olympe immolant l'évangile."*)

[There was in Rome one antique usage as follows: On the eve of the execution day, the sufferers were given a public banquet — at the prison-gate — known as the "Free Festival."—CHATEAUBRIAND'S "MARTYRS."]

TO YE KINGS.

WHEN the Christians were doomed to the lions of old
By the priest and the prætor, combined to uphold
 An idolatrous cause,
Forth they came while the vast Colosseum throughout
Gathered thousands looked on, and they fell 'mid the shout
 Of "the People's" applause.

On the eve of that day of their evenings the last!
At the gates of their dungeon a gorgeous repast,
 Rich, unstinted, unpriced,
That the doomed might (forsooth) gather strength ere they
 bled,
With an ignorant pity the gaolers would spread
 For the martyrs of Christ.

Oh, 'twas strange for a pupil of Paul to recline
On voluptuous couch, while Falernian wine
 Fill'd his cup to the brim!
Dulcet music of Greece, Asiatic repose,
Spicy fragrance of Araby, Italian rose,
 All united for him!

Every luxury known through the earth's wide expanse,
In profusion procured was put forth to enhance
 The repast that they gave;
And no Sybarite, nursed in the lap of delight,
Such a banquet ere tasted as welcomed that night
 The elect of the grave.

And the lion, meantime, shook his ponderous chain,
 Loud and fierce howled the tiger, impatient to stain
 The bloodthirsty arena;
 Whilst the women of Rome, who applauded those deeds
 And who hailed the forthcoming enjoyment, must needs
 Shame the restless hyæna.

They who figured as guests on that ultimate eve,
 In their turn on the morrow were destined to give
 To the lions their food;
 For, behold, in the guise of a slave at that board,
 Where his victims enjoyed all that life can afford,
 Death administering stood.

Such, O monarchs of earth! was your banquet of power,
 But the tocsin has burst on your festival hour —
 'Tis your knell that it rings!
 To the popular tiger a prey is decreed,
 And the maw of Republican hunger will feed
 On a banquet of Kings!
 “FATHER PROUT” (FRANK MAHONY).

GENIUS

(TO CHATEAUBRIAND.)

(“*Malheur à l'enfant!*”)

Woe unto him! the child of this sad earth,
 Who, in a troubled world, unjust and blind,
 Bears Genius — treasure of celestial birth,
 Within his solitary soul enshrined.
 Woe unto him! for Envy's pangs impure,
 Like the undying vultures', will be driven
 Into his noble heart, that must endure
 Pangs for each triumph; and, still unforgiven,
 Suffer Prometheus' doom, who ravished fire from Heaven.

Still though his destiny on earth may be
 Grief and injustice; who would not endure,
 With joyful calm, each proffered agony;
 Could he the prize of Genius thus ensure?
 What mortal feeling kindled in his soul
 That clear celestial flame, so pure and high,
 O'er which nor time nor death can have control,
 Would in inglorious pleasures basely fly.
 From sufferings whose reward is Immortality?
 No! though the clamours of the envious crowd
 Pursue the son of Genius, he will rise

From the dull clod, borne by an effort proud
 Beyond the reach of vulgar enmities.
 'Tis thus the eagle, with his pinions spread,
 Reposing o'er the tempest, from that height
 Sees the clouds reel and roll above our head,
 While he, rejoicing in his tranquil flight,
 More upward soars sublime in heaven's eternal light.

MRS. TORRE HULME

THE GIRL OF OTAHEITE

“ O! dis-moi, tu veux fuir? ”

FORGET? Can I forget the scented breath
 Of breezes, sighing of thee, in mine ear;
 The strange awaking from a dream of death,
 The sudden thrill to find thee coming near?
 Our huts were desolate, and far away
 I heard thee calling me throughout the day,
 No one had seen thee pass,
 Trembling I came. Alas!
 Can I forget?

Once I was beautiful; my maiden charms
 Died with the grief that from my bosom fell.
 Ah! weary traveller! rest in my loving arms!
 Let there be no regrets and no farewell!
 Here of thy mother sweet, where waters flow,
 Here of thy fatherland we whispered low;
 Here, music, praise, and prayer
 Filled the glad summer air.
 Can I forget?

Forget? My dear old home must I forget?
 And wander forth and hear my people weep,
 Far from the woods where, when the sun has set,
 Fearless but weary to thy arms I creep;
 Far from lush flow'rets and the palmtree's moan
 I could not live. Here let me rest alone!
 Go! I must follow nigh,
 With thee I'm doomed to die,
 Never forget!

CLEMENT SCOTT.

NERO'S INCENDIARY SONG

(*"Amis! ennui nous tue."*)

AWEARY unto death, my friends, a mood by wise abhorred,
 Come to the novel feast I spread, thrice-consul, Nero, lord,
 The Cæsar, master of the world, and eke of harmony,
 Who plays the harp of many strings, a chief of minstrelsy.

My joyful call should instantly bring all who love me most,—
 For ne'er were seen such arch delights from Greek or Roman
 host;
 Nor at the free, control-less jousts, where, spite of cynic
 vaunts,
 Austere but lenient Seneca no "Ercles" bumper daunts;

Nor where upon the Tiber floats Aglaë in galley gay,
 'Neath Asian tent of brilliant stripes, in gorgeous array;
 Nor when to lutes and tambourines the wealthy prefect flings
 A score of slaves, their fetters wreathed, to feed grim, greedy
 things.

I vow to show ye Rome aflame, the whole town in a mass;
 Upon this tower we'll take our stand to watch the 'wilderer
 pass;
 How paltry fights of men and beasts! here be my combatants,—
 The Seven Hills my circus form, and fiends shall lead the
 dance.

This is more meet for him who rules to drive away his stress —
 He, being god, should lightnings hurl and make a wilderness —
 But, haste! for night is darkling — soon, the festival it
 brings;
 Already see the hydra show its tongues and sombre wings,
 And mark upon a shrinking prey the rush of kindling
 breaths;
 They tap and sap the threatened walls, and bear uncounted
 deaths;
 And 'neath caresses scorching hot the palaces decay —
 Oh, that I, too, could thus caress, and burn, and blight, and
 slay!

Hark to the hubbub! scent the fumes! Are those real men
 or ghosts?
 The stillness spreads of Death abroad — down come the temple
 posts,
 Their molten bronze is coursing fast and joins with silver
 waves
 To leap with hiss of thousand snakes where Tiber writhes and
 raves.

All's lost! in jasper, marble, gold, the statues totter — crash!
Spite of the names divine engraved, they are but dust and ash.
The victor-scourge sweeps swollen on, whilst north winds
 sound the horn

To goad the flies of fire yet beyond the flight forlorn.

Proud capital! farewell for e'er! these flames nought can sub-
 due —

The Aqueduct of Sylla gleams, a bridge o'er hellish brew.
'Tis Nero's whim! how good to see Rome brought the lowest
 down;

Yet, Queen of all the earth, give thanks for such a splendid
 crown!

When I was young, the Sybils pledged eternal rule to thee;
That Time himself would lay his bones before thy unbent
 knee.

Ha! ha! how brief indeed the space ere this "immortal star"
Shall be consumed in its own glow, and vanished — oh, how
 far!

How lovely conflagrations look when night is utter dark!
The youth who fired Ephesus' fane falls low beneath my mark.
The pangs of people — when I sport, what matters? — See
 them whirl

About, as salamanders frisk and in the brazier curl.

Take from my brow this poor rose-crown — the flames have
 made it pine;

If blood rains on your festive gowns, wash off with Cretan
 wine!

I like not overmuch that red — good taste says "gild a
 crime!"

"To stifle shrieks by drinking-songs" is — thanks! a hint
 sublime!

I punish Rome, I am avenged; did she not offer prayers
 Erst unto Jove, late unto Christ? — to e'en a Jew, she dares!
 Now, in thy terror, own my right to rule above them all;
 Alone I rest — except this pile, I leave no single hall.

Yet I destroy to build a new, and Rome shall fairer shine —
 But out, my guards, and slay the dolts who thought me not
 divine.

The stiffnecks, haste! annihilate! make ruin all complete —
 And, slaves, bring in fresh roses — what odour is more sweet?

H. L. WILLIAMS.

REGRET

(“*Oui, le bonheur bien vite a passé.*”)

YES, Happiness hath left me soon behind!

Alas! we all pursue its steps! and when
 We've sunk to rest within its arms entwined,
 Like the Phœnician virgin, wake, and find
 Ourselves alone again.

Then, through the distant future's boundless space,

We seek the lost companion of our days:
 “Return, return!” we cry, and lo, apace
 Pleasure appears! but not to fill the place
 Of that we mourn always.

I, should unhallowed Pleasure woo me now,

Will to the wanton sorc'ress say, “Begone!
 Respect the cypress on my mournful brow,
 Lost Happiness hath left regret — but *thou*
 Leavest remorse, alone.”

Yet, haply lest I check the mounting fire,

O friends, that in your revelry appears!

With you I'll breathe the air which ye respire,
 And, smiling, hide my melancholy lyre
 When it is wet with tears.

Each in his secret heart perchance doth own
 Some fond regret 'neath passing smiles concealed; —
 Sufferers alike together and alone
 Are we; with many a grief to others known,
 How many unrevealed!

Alas! for natural tears and simple pains,
 For tender recollections, cherished long,
 For guileless griefs, which no compunction stains,
 We blush; as if we wore these earthly chains
 Only for sport and song!

Yes, my blest hours have fled without a trace:
 In vain I strove their parting to delay;
 Brightly they beamed, then left a cheerless space,
 Like an o'erclouded smile, that in the face
 Lightens, and fades away.

Fraser's Magazine.

MORNING

(*"Le voile du matin."*)

THE mist of the morning is torn by the peaks,
 Old towers gleam white in the ray,
 And already the glory so joyously seeks
 The lark that's saluting the day.

Then smile away, man, at the heavens so fair,
 Though, were you swept hence in the night,
 From your dark, lonely tomb the owlets would stare
 At the sun rising newly as bright.

But out of earth's trammels your soul would have flown
 Where glitters Eternity's stream,
 And you shall have waked 'midst pure glories unknown,
 As sunshine disperses a dream.

H. L. W.

BELOVED NAME

(*"Le parfum d'un lis."*)

THE lily's perfume pure, fame's crown of light,
 The latest murmur of departing day,
 Fond friendship's plaint, that melts at piteous sight,
 The mystic farewell of each hour at flight,
 The kiss which beauty grants with coy delay,—

The seven-fold scarf that parting storms bestow
 As trophy to the proud, triumphant sun;
 The thrilling accent of a voice we know,
 The love-enthralled maiden's secret vow,
 An infant's dream, ere life's first sands be run,—

The chant of distant choirs, the morning's sigh,
 Which erst inspired the fabled Memnon's frame,—
 The melodies that, hummed, so trembling die,—
 The sweetest gems that 'mid thought's treasures lie,
 Have nought of sweetness that can match HER NAME!

Low be its utterance, like a prayer divine,
 Yet in each warbled song be heard the sound;
 Be it the light in darksome fanes to shine,
 The sacred word which at some hidden shrine,
 The self-same voice forever makes resound!

O friends! ere yet, in living strains of flame,
 My muse, bewildered in her circlings wide,

With names the vaunting lips of pride proclaim,
Shall dare to blend the *one*, the purer name,
Which love a treasure in my breast doth hide,—

Must the wild lay my faithful harp can sing,
Be like the hymns which mortals, kneeling, hear;
To solemn harmonies attuned the string,
As, music show'ring from his viewless wing,
On heavenly airs some angel hovered near.

CAROLINE BOWLES (MRS. SOUTHEY).

THE PORTRAIT OF A CHILD

(*"Oui, ce front, ce sourire."*)

THAT brow, that smile, that cheek so fair,
Beseech my child, who weeps and plays;
A heavenly spirit guards her ways,
From whom she stole that mixture rare.
Through all her features shining mild,
The poet sees an angel there,
The father sees a child.

And by their flame so pure and bright,
We see how lately those sweet eyes
Have wandered down from Paradise,
And still are lingering in its light.

All earthly things are but a shade
Through which she looks at things above
And sees the holy Mother-maid,
Athwart her mother's glance of love.

She seems celestial songs to hear,
And virgin souls are whispering near,

Till by her radiant smile deceived,
I say, "Young angel, lately given,
When was thy martyrdom achieved?
And what name dost thou bear in Heaven?"
Dublin University Magazine.

BALLADES.—1823-'28

THE GRANDMOTHER

(“*Dors-tu? . . . réveille toi!*”)

“To die—to sleep.”—SHAKESPEARE.

STILL asleep! We have been since the noon thus alone.
Oh, the hours we have ceased to number!

Wake, grandmother!—speechless say why thou art
grown.

Then, thy lips are so cold!—the Madonna of stone
Is like thee in thy holy slumber.

We have watched thee in sleep, we have watched thee at
prayer,

But what can now betide thee?

Like thy hours of repose all thy orisons were,
And thy lips would still murmur a blessing whene'er
Thy children stood beside thee.

Now thine eye is unclosed, and thy forehead is bent

O'er the hearth, where ashes smoulder;

And behold, the watch-lamp will be speedily spent.

Art thou vexed? have we done aught amiss? Oh, relent!

But—parent, thy hands grow colder!

Say, with ours wilt thou let us rekindle in thine

The glow that has departed?

Wilt thou sing us some song of the days of lang syne?

Wilt thou tell us some tale, from those volumes divine,

Of the brave and noble-hearted?

Of the dragon who, crouching in forest green glen,
 Lies in wait for the unwary —
 Of the maid who was freed by her knight from the den
 Of the ogre, whose club was uplifted, but then
 Turned aside by the wand of a fairy?
 Wilt thou teach us spell-words that protect from all harm,
 And thoughts of evil banish?
 What goblins the sign of the cross may disarm?
 What saint it is good to invoke? and what charm
 Can make the demon vanish?

Or unfold to our gaze thy most wonderful book,
 So feared by hell and Satan;
 At its hermits and martyrs in gold let us look,
 At the virgins, and bishops with pastoral crook,
 And the hymns and the prayers in Latin.
 Oft with legends of angels, who watch o'er the young,
 Thy voice was wont to gladden;
 Have thy lips yet no language — no wisdom thy tongue?
 Oh, see! the light wavers, and sinking, hath flung
 On the wall forms that sadden.

Wake! awake! evil spirits perhaps may presume
 To haunt thy holy dwelling;
 Pale ghosts are, perhaps, stealing into the room —
 Oh, would that the lamp were relit! with the gloom
 These fearful thoughts dispelling.
 Thou hast told us our parents lie sleeping beneath
 The grass, in a churchyard lonely:
 Now, thine eyes have no motion, thy mouth has no breath,
 And thy limbs are all rigid! Oh, say, *Is this death*,
 Or thy prayer or thy slumber only?

ENVOY.

Sad vigil they kept by that grandmother's chair,
 Kind angels hovered o'er them —
 And the dead-bell was tolled in the hamlet — and there,

On the following eve, knelt that innocent pair,
With the missal-book before them.

“FATHER PROUT” (FRANK S. MAHONY).

THE GIANT IN GLEE

(“*Ho, guerriers! je suis né dans le pays des Gaules.*”)

Ho, warriors! I was reared in the land of the Gauls;
O'er the Rhine my ancestors came bounding like balls
Of the snow at the Pole, where, a babe, I was bathed
Ere in bear and in walrus-skin I was enswathed.

Then my father was strong, whom the years lowly bow,—
A bison could wallow in the grooves of his brow.
He is weak, very old — he can scarcely uptear
A young pine-tree for staff since his legs cease to bear;

But here's to replace him! — I can toy with his axe;
As I sit on the hill my feet swing in the flax,
And my knee caps the boulders and troubles the trees.
How they shiver, yea, quake if I happen to sneeze!

I was still but a springald when, cleaving the Alps,
I brushed snowy periwigs off granitic scalps,
And my head, o'er the pinnacles, stopped the fleet clouds,
Where I captured the eagles and caged them by crowds.

There were tempests! I blew them back unto their source!
And put out their lightnings! More than once in a course,
Through the ocean I went wading after the whale,
And stirred up the bottom as did never a gale.

Fond of rambling, I hunted the shark 'long the beach,
And no osprey in ether soared out of my reach;
And the bear that I pinched 'twixt my finger and thumb,
Like the lynx and the wolf, perished harmless and dumb.

But these pleasures of childhood have lost all their zest;
 It is warfare and carnage that now I love best:
 The sounds that I wish to awaken and hear
 Are the cheers raised by courage, the shrieks due to fear;

When the riot of flames, ruin, smoke, steel and blood,
 Announces an army rolls along as a flood,
 Which I follow, to harry the clamorous ranks,
 Sharp-goaded the laggards and pressing the flanks,
 Till, a thresher 'mid ripest of corn, up I stand
 With an oak for a flail in my unflagging hand.

Rise the groans! rise the screams! on my feet fall vain tears
 As the roar of my laughter redoubles their fears.
 I am naked. At armour of steel I should joke —
 True, I'm helmed — a brass pot you could draw with ten
 yoke.

I look for no ladder to invade the king's hall —
 I stride o'er the ramparts, and down the walls fall,
 Till choked are the ditches with the stones, dead and quick,
 Whilst the flagstaff I use 'midst my teeth as a pick.

Oh, when cometh my turn to succumb like my prey,
 May brave men my body snatch away from th' array
 Of the crows — may they heap on the rocks till they loom
 Like a mountain, befitting a colossus' tomb!

Foreign Quarterly Review (adapted).

THE CYMBALEER'S BRIDE

("Monseigneur le Duc de Bretagne.")

My lord the Duke of Brittany
 Has summoned his barons bold —
 Their names make a fearful litany!
 Among them you will not meet any
 But men of giant mould.

Proud earls, who dwell in donjon keep,
 And steel-clad knight and peer,
 Whose forts are girt with a moat cut deep. —
 But none excel in soldiership
 My own loved cymbaleer.

Clashing his cymbals, forth he went,
 With a bold and gallant bearing;
 Sure for a captain he was meant,
 To judge his pride with courage blent,
 And the cloth of gold he's wearing.

But in my soul since then I feel
 A fear in secret creeping;
 And to my patron saint I kneel,
 That she may recommend his weal
 To his guardian-angel's keeping.

I've begged our abbot Bernardine
 His prayers not to relax;
 And to procure him aid divine
 I've burnt upon Saint Gilda's shrine
 Three pounds of virgin wax.

Our Lady of Loretto knows
 The pilgrimage I've vowed:
 "To wear the scallop I propose,
 If health and safety from the foes
 My lover be allowed."

No letter (fond affection's gage!)
 From him could I require,
 The pain of absence to assuage —
 A vassal-maid can have no page,
 A liegeman has no squire.

This day will witness, with the duke's,
 My cymbaleer's return:

Gladness and pride beam in my looks,
Delay my heart impatient brooks,
All meaner thoughts I spurn.

Back from the battlefield elate
His banner brings each peer;
Come, let us see, at the ancient gate,
The martial triumph pass in state —
With the princes my cymbaleer.

We'll have from the rampart walls a glance
Of the air his steed assumes;
His proud neck swells, his glad hoofs prance,
And on his head unceasing dance,
In a gorgeous tuft, red plumes!

Be quick, my sisters! dress in haste!
Come, see him bear the bell,
With laurels decked, with true love graced,
While in his bold hands, fitly placed,
The bounding cymbals swell!

Mark well the mantle that he'll wear,
Embroidered by his bride!
Admire his burnished helmet's glare,
O'ershadowed by the dark horsehair
That waves in jet folds wide!

The gipsy (spiteful wench!) foretold,
With a voice like a viper hissing
(Though I had crossed her palm with gold),
That from the ranks a spirit bold
Would be to-day found missing.

But I have prayed so much, I trust
Her words may prove untrue;
Though in a tomb the hag accurst
Muttered: "Prepare thee for the worst!"
Whilst the lamp burnt ghastly blue.

My joy her spells shall not prevent.
 Hark! I can hear the drums!
 And ladies fair from silken tent
 Peep forth, and every eye is bent
 On the cavalcade that comes!

Pikemen, dividing on both flanks,
 Open the pageantry;
 Loud, as they tread, their armour clanks,
 And silk-robed barons lead the ranks —
 The pink of gallantry!

In scarves of gold the priests admire:
 The heralds on white steeds;
 Armorial pride decks their attire,
 Worn in remembrance of some sire
 Famed for heroic deeds.

Feared by the Paynim's dark divan,
 The Templars next advance;
 Then the tall halberds of Lausanne,
 Foremost to stand in battle van
 Against the foes of France.

Now hail the duke, with radiant brow,
 Girt with his cavaliers;
 Round his triumphant banner bow
 Those of his foe. Look, sisters, now!
 Here come the cymbaleers!

She spoke — with searching eye surveyed
 Their ranks — then, pale, aghast,
 Sunk in the crowd! Death came in aid —
 'Twas mercy to that loving maid —
 The cymbaleers had passed!

“FATHER PROUT” (FRANK S. MAHONY).

THE BATTLE

(“ *Accourez tous, oiseaux de proie!* ”).

Ho! hither flock, ye fowls of prey!
Ye wolves of war, make no delay!
For foemen 'neath our blades shall fall
Ere night may veil with purple pall.
The evening psalms are nearly o'er,
And priests who follow in our train
Have promised us the final gain,
And filled with faith our valiant corps.

Let orphans weep, and widows brood!
To-morrow we shall wash the blood
Off saw-gapped sword and lances bent.
So, close the ranks and fire the tent!
And chill yon coward cavalcade
With brazen bugles blaring loud,
E'en though our chargers' neighing proud
Already has the host dismayed.

Spur, horsemen, spur! the charge resounds!
On Gaelic spear the Northman bounds!
Through helmet plumes the arrows flit,
And plated breasts the pikeheads split.
The double-axe fells human oaks,
And like the thistles in the field
See bristling up (where none must yield!)
The points hewn off by sweeping strokes!

We, heroes all, our wounds disdain;
Dismounted now, our horses slain,
Yet we advance — more courage show,

Though stricken, seek to overthrow
The victor-knights who tread in mud
The writhing slaves who bite the heel,
While on caparisons of steel
The maces thunder — cudgels thud!

Should daggers fail hide-coats to shred,
Seize each your man and hug him dead!
Who falls unslain will only make
A mouthful to the wolves who slake
Their month-whet thirst. No captives, none!
We die or win! but should we die,
The lopped-off arm will wave on high
The broken brand to hail the sun!

H. L. W.

MADELAINE

(“*Ecoute-moi, Madeleine.*”)

LIST to me, O Madelaine!
Now the snows have left the plain,
Which they warmly cloaked.
Come into the forest groves,
Where the notes that Echo loves
Are from horns evoked.

Come! where Springtide, Madelaine,
Brings a sultry breath from Spain,
Giving buds their hue;
And, last night, to glad your eye,
Laid the floral marquetry,
Red and gold and blue.

Would I were, O Madelaine,
As the lamb whose wool you train
Through your tender hands.

Would I were the bird that whirls
Round, and comes to peck your curls,
Happy in such bands.

Were I e'en, O Madelaine,
Hermit whom the herd disdain
In his pious cell,
When your purest lips unfold
Sins which might to all be told,
As to him you tell.

Would I were, O Madelaine,
Moth that murmurs 'gainst your pane,
Peering at your rest,
As, so like its woolly wing,
Ceasing scarce its fluttering,
Heaves and sinks your breast.

If you seek it, Madelaine,
You may wish, and not in vain,
For a serving host,
And your splendid hall of state
Shall be envied by the great,
O'er the Jew-King's boast.

If you name it, Madelaine,
Round your head no more you'll train
Simple marguerites,
No! the coronet of peers,
Whom the queen herself oft fears,
And the monarch greets.

If you wish, O Madelaine!
Where you gaze you long shall reign —
For I'm ruler here!
I'm the lord who asks your hand
If you do not bid me stand
Loving shepherd here!

H. L. W.

THE FAY AND THE PERI

(*"Où vas-tu donc, jeune âme."*)

THE PERI.

BEAUTIFUL spirit, come with me
Over the blue enchanted sea:
Morn and evening thou canst play
In my garden, where the breeze
Warbles through the fruity trees;
No shadow falls upon the day:
There thy mother's arms await
Her cherished infant at the gate.
Of Peris I the loveliest far —
My sisters, near the morning star,
In ever youthful bloom abide;
But pale their lustre by my side —
A silken turban wreathes my head,
Rubies on my arms are spread,
While sailing slowly through the sky,
By the uplooker's dazzled eye
Are seen my wings of purple hue,
Glittering with Elysian dew.

Whiter than a far-off sail

My form of beauty glows,
Fair as on a summer night
Dawns the sleep-star's gentle light;
And fragrant as the early rose
That scents the green Arabian vale,
Soothing the pilgrim as he goes.

THE FAY.

Beautiful infant (said the Fay),
In the region of the sun
I dwell, where in a rich array

The clouds encircle the king of day,
 His radiant journey done.
 My wings, pure golden, of radiant sheen
 (Painted as amorous poet's strain),
 Glimmer at night, when meadows green
 Sparkle with the perfumed rain
 While the sun's gone to come again.
 And clear my hand, as stream that flows;
 And sweet my breath as air of May;
 And o'er my ivory shoulders stray
 Locks of sunshine; — tunes still play
 From my odorous lips of rose.

Follow, follow! I have caves
 Of pearl beneath the azure waves,
 And tents all woven pleasantly
 In verdant glades of Faëry.
 Come, belovéd child, with me,
 And I will bear thee to the bowers
 Where clouds are painted o'er like flowers,
 And pour into thy charmed ear
 Songs a mortal may not hear;
 Harmonies so sweet and ripe
 As no inspired shepherd's pipe
 E'er breathed into Arcadian glen,
 Far from the busy haunts of men.

THE PERI.

My home is afar in the bright Orient,
 Where the sun, like a king, in his orange tent,
 Reigneth for ever in gorgeous pride —
 And wafting thee, princess of rich countree,
 To the soft flute's lush melody,
 My golden vessel will gently glide,
 Kindling the water 'long the side.

Vast cities are mine of power and delight,
 Lahore laid in lilies, Golconda, Cashmere;
 And Ispahan, dear to the pilgrim's sight,
 And Bagdad, whose towers to heaven uprear;
 Alep, that pours on the startled ear,
 From its restless masts the gathering roar,
 As of ocean hamm'ring at night on the shore.

Mysore is a queen on her stately throne,
 Thy white domes, Medina, gleam on the eye,—
 Thy radiant kiosques with their arrowy spires,
 Shooting afar their golden fires
 Into the flashing sky,—
 Like a forest of spears that startle the gaze
 Of the enemy with the vivid blaze.

Come there, beautiful child, with me,
 Come to the arcades of Araby,
 To the land of the date and the purple vine,
 Where pleasure her rosy wreaths doth twine,
 And gladness shall be alway thine;
 Singing at sunset next thy bed,
 Strewing flowers under thy head.

Beneath a verdant roof of leaves,
 Arching a flow'ry carpet o'er,
 Thou mayst list to lutes on summer eves
 Their lays of rustic freshness pour,
 While upon the grassy floor
 Light footsteps, in the hour of calm,
 Ruffle the shadow of the palm.

THE FAY.

Come to the radiant homes of the blest,
 Where meadows like fountain in light are drest,
 And the grottoes of verdure never decay,
 And the glow of the August ~~dies~~ not away.

Come where the autumn winds never can sweep,
And the streams of the woodland steep thee in sleep,
Like a fond sister charming the eyes of a brother,
Or a little lass lulled on the breast of her mother.
Beautiful! beautiful! hasten to me!
Colored with crimson thy wings shall be;
Flowers that fade not thy forehead shall twine,
Over thee sunlight that sets not shall shine.

The infant listened to the strain,
Now here, now there, its thoughts were driven —
But the Fay and the Peri waited in vain,
The soul soared above such a sensual gain —
The child rose to Heaven.

Asiatic Journal.

LES ORIENTALES.—1829

THE SCOURGE OF HEAVEN,

(“ *Là, voyez-vous passer, la nuée.*”)

I.

HAST seen it pass, that cloud of darkest rim?
Now red and glorious, and now grey and dim,
Now sad as summer, barren in its heat?
One seems to see at once rush through the night
The smoke and turmoil from a burning site
Of some great town in fiery grasp complete.

Whence comes it? From the sea, the hills, the sky?
Is it the flaming chariot from on high
Which demons to some planet seem to bring?
Oh, horror! from its wondrous centre, lo!
A furious stream of lightning seems to flow
Like a long snake uncoiling its fell ring.

II.

The sea! naught but the sea! waves on all sides!
Vainly the sea-bird would outstrip these tides!
Nought but an endless ebb and flow!
Wave upon wave advancing, then controlled
Beneath the depths a stream the eyes behold
Rolling in the involved abyss below!

Whilst here and there great fishes in the spray
Their silvery fins beneath the sun display,

Or their blue tails lash up from out the surge,
 Like to a flock the sea its fleece doth fling;
 The horizon's edge bound by a brazen ring;
 Waters and sky in mutual azure merge.

"Am I to dry these seas?" exclaimed the cloud.
 "No!" It went onward 'neath the breath of God.

III.

Green hills, which round a limpid bay,
 Reflected, bask in the clear wave!
 The javelin and its buffalo prey,
 The laughter and the joyous stave!
 The tent, the manger! these describe
 A hunting and a fishing tribe
 Free as the air — their arrows fly
 Swifter than lightning through the sky!
 By them is breathed the purest air,
 Where'er their wanderings may chance!
 Children and maidens young and fair,
 And warriors circling in the dance!
 Upon the beach, around the fire,
 Now quenched by wind, now burning higher,
 Like spirits which our dreams inspire
 To hover o'er our trance.

Virgins, with skins of ebony,
 Beauteous as evening skies,
 Laughed as their forms they dimly see
 In metal mirrors rise;
 Others, as joyously as they,
 Were drawing for their food by day,
 With jet-black hands, white camels' whey,
 Camels with docile eyes.

Both men and women, bare,
 Plunged in the briny bay.
 Who knows them? Whence they were?
 Where passed they yesterday?

Shrill sounds were hovering o'er,
Mixed with the ocean's roar,
Of cymbals from the shore,
And whinnying courser's neigh.

"Is't there?" one moment asked the cloudy mass;
"Is't there?" An unknown utterance answered: "Pass!"

IV.

Whitened with grain see Egypt's lengthened plains,
Far as the eyesight farthest space contains,
Like a rich carpet spread their varied hues.
The cold sea north, southwards the burying sand
Dispute o'er Egypt — while the smiling land
Still mockingly their empire does refuse.

Three marble triangles seem to pierce the sky,
And hide their basements from the curious eye.
Mountains — with waves of ashes covered o'er!
In graduated blocks of six feet square
From golden base to top, from earth to air
Their ever heightening monstrous steps they bore.

No scorching blast could daunt the sleepless ken
Of roseate Sphinx, and god of marble green,
Which stood as guardians o'er the sacred ground.
For a great port steered vessels huge and fleet,
A giant city bathed her marble feet
In the bright waters round.

One heard the dread simoom in distance roar,
Whilst the crushed shell upon the pebbly shore
Crackled beneath the crocodile's huge coil.
Westwards, like tiger's skin, each separate isle
Spotted the surface of the yellow Nile;
Grey obelisks shot upwards from the soil.

The star-king set. The sea, it seemed to hold
 In the calm mirror this live globe of gold,
 This world, the soul and torchbearer of our own.
 In the red sky, and in the purple streak,
 Like friendly kings who would each other seek,
 Two meeting suns were shown.

"Shall I not stop?" exclaimed the impatient cloud.
 "Seek!" trembling Tabor heard the voice of God.

v.

Sand, sand and still more sand!
 The desert! Fearful land!
 Teeming with monsters dread
 And plagues on every hand!
 Here in an endless flow,
 Sandhills of golden glow,
 Where'er the tempests blow,
 Like a great flood are spread.
 Sometimes the sacred spot
 Hears human sounds profane, when
 As from Ophir or from Memphre
 Stretches the caravan.

From far the eyes, its trail
 Along the burning shale
 Bending its wavering tail,
 Like a mottled serpent scan.
 These deserts are of God!
 His are the bounds alone,
 Here, where no feet have trod,
 To Him its centre known!
 And from this smoking sea
 Veiled in obscurity,
 The foam one seems to see
 In fiery ashes thrown.

"Shall desert change to lake?" cried out the cloud.
"Still further!" from heaven's depths sounded that Voice
aloud.

VI.

Like tumbled waves, which a huge rock surround;
Like heaps of ruined towers which strew the ground,
See Babel now deserted and dismayed!
Huge witness to the folly of mankind;
Four distant mountains when the moonlight shined
Seem covered with its shade.

O'er miles and miles the shattered ruins spread
Beneath its base, from captive tempests bred,
The air seemed filled with harmony strange and dire;
While swarmed around the entire human race
A future Babel, on the world's whole space
Fixed its eternal spire.

Up to the zenith rose its lengthening stair,
While each great granite mountain lent a share
To form a stepping base;
Height upon height repeated seemed to rise,
For pyramid on pyramid the strained eyes
Saw take their ceaseless place.

Through yawning walls huge elephants stalked by;
Under dark pillars rose a forestry,
Pillars by madness multiplied;
As round some giant hive, all day and night,
Huge vultures, and red eagles' wheeling flight
Was through each porch descried.

"Must I complete it?" said the angered cloud.
"On still!" "Lord, whither?" groaned it, deep not loud.

VII.

Two cities, strange, unknown in history's page,
Up to the clouds seemed scaling, stage by stage,

Noiseless their streets; their sleeping inmates lie,
Their gods, their chariots, in obscurity!
Like sisters sleeping 'neath the same moonlight,
O'er their twin towers crept the shades of night,
Whilst scarce distinguished in the black profound,
Stairs, aqueducts, great pillars, gleamed around,
And ruined capitals: then was seen a group
Of granite elephants 'neath a dome to stoop,
Shapeless, giant forms to view arise,
Monsters around, the spawn of hideous ties!
Then hanging gardens, with flowers and galleries:
O'er vast fountains bending grew ebony trees;
Temples, where seated on their rich tiled thrones,
Bull-headed idols shone in jasper stones;
Vast halls, spanned by one block, where watch and stare
Each upon each, with straight and moveless glare,
Colossal heads in circles; the eye sees
Great gods of bronze, their hands upon their knees.
Sight seemed confounded, and to have lost its powers,
'Midst bridges, aqueducts, arches, and round towers,
Whilst unknown shapes fill up the devious views
Formed by these palaces and avenues.
Like capes, the lengthening shadows seem to rise
Of these dark buildings, pointed to the skies,
Immense entanglement in shroud of gloom!
The stars which gleamed in the empyrean dome,
Under the thousand arches in heaven's space
Shone as through meshes of the blackest lace.
Cities of hell, with foul desires demented,
And monstrous pleasures, hour by hour invented!
Each roof and home some monstrous mystery bore!
Which through the world spread like a two-fold sore!
Yet all things slept, and scarce some pale late light,
Flitted along the streets through the still night,
Lamps of debauch, forgotten and alone,
The feast's lost fires left there to flicker on;
The walls' large angles clove the light-lengthening shades

'Neath the white moon, or on some pool's face played.
Perchance one heard, faint in the plain beneath,
The kiss suppressed, the mingling of the breath;
And the two sister cities, tired of heat,
In love's embrace lay down in murmurs sweet!
Whilst sighing winds the scent of sycamore
From Sodom to Gomorrah softly bore!
Then over all spread out the blackened cloud,
" 'Tis here!" the Voice on high exclaimed aloud.

VIII.

From a cavern wide
In the rent cloud's side,
In sulphurous showers
The red flame pours.
The palaces fall
In the lurid light,
Which casts a red pall
O'er their façades white!

Oh, Sodom! Gomorrah!
What a dome of horror
Rests now on your walls!
On you the cloud falls,
Nation perverse!
On your fated heads,
From its fell jaws, a curse
Its lightning fierce spreads!

The people awaken
Which godlessly slept;
Their palaces shaken,
Their offences unwept!
Their rolling cars all
Meet and crash in the street;
And the crowds, for a pall,
Find flames round their feet!

Numberless dead,
Round these high towers spread,
Still sleep in the shade
By their rugged heights made;
Colossi of rocks
In ill-steadied blocks!
So hang on a wall
Black ants like a pall!

To escape is in vain
From this horrible rain!
Alas! all things die;
In the lightning's red flash
The bridges all crash;
'Neath the tiles the flame creeps;
From the fire-struck steeps
Falls on the pavements below,
All lurid in glow,
Rolling down from on high!

Beneath every spark,
The red, tyrannous fire
Mounts up in the dark
Ever redder and higher;
More swiftly than steed
Uncontrolled, see it pass!
Horrid idols all twist,
By the crumbling flame kissed
In their infamous dread,
Shrivelled members of brass!

It grows angry, flows on,
Silver towers fall down
Unforeseen, like a dream
In its green and red stream,
Which lights up the walls

Ere one crashes and falls,
Like the changeable scale
Of a lizard's bright mail.
Agate, porphyry, cracks
And is melted into wax!
Bend low to their doom
These stones of the tomb!
E'en the great marble giant
Called Nabo, sways pliant
Like a tree; whilst the flare
 Seemed each column to scorch
 As it blazed like a torch
Round and round in the air.

The magi, in vain,
From the heights to the plain
Their gods' images carry
 In white tunic: they quake —
 No idol can make
The blue sulphur tarry;
The temple e'en where they meet,
Swept under their feet
In the folds of its sheet!
Turns a palace to coal!
Whence the straitened cries roll
From its terrified flock;
 With incendiary grips
It loosens a block,
 Which smokes and then slips
From its place by the shock;
 To the surface first sheers,
 Then melts, disappears,
Like the glacier, the rock!
The high priest, full of years,
On the burnt site appears,
 Whence the others have fled.
Lo! his tiara's caught fire

As the furnace burns higher,
 And pale, full of dread,
 See, the hand he would raise
 To tear his crown from the blaze
 Is flaming instead!

Men, women, in crowds
 Hurry on — the fire shrouds
 And blinds all their eyes
 As, besieging each gate
 Of these cities of fate
 To the conscious-struck crowd,
 In each fiery cloud,
 Hell appears in the skies!

IX.

Men say that *then*, to see his foe's sad fall
 As some old prisoner clings to his prison wall,
 Babel, accomplice of their guilt, was seen
 O'er the far hills to gaze with vision keen!
 And as was worked this dispensation strange,
 A wondrous noise filled the world's startled range;
 Reached the dull hearing that deep, direful sound
 Of their sad tribe who live below the ground.

X.

'Gainst this pitiless flame who condemned could prevail?
 Who these walls, burnt and calcined, could venture to scale?
 Yet their vile hands they sought to uplift,
 Yet they cared still to ask from what God, by what law?
 In their last sad embrace, 'midst their horror and awe,
 Of this mighty volcano the drift.

'Neath great slabs of marble they hid them in vain,
 'Gainst this everliving fire, God's own flaming rain!
 'Tis the rash whom God seeks out the first;
 They call on their gods, who were deaf to their cries,

For the punishing flame caused their cold granite eyes
In tears of hot lava to burst!
Thus away in the whirlwind did everything pass,
The man and the city, the soil and its grass!
God burnt this sad, sterile champaign;
Nought living was left of this people destroyed,
And the unknown wind which blew over the void,
Each mountain changed into a plain.

XI.

The palm-tree that grows on the rock to this day,
Feels its leaf growing yellow, its slight stem decay,
In the blasting and ponderous air;
These towns are no more! but to mirror their past,
O'er their embers a cold lake spread far and spread fast,
With smoke like a furnace, lies there!

J. N. FAZAKERLEY.

PIRATES' SONG

(*"Nous emmenions en esclavage."*)

WE'RE bearing five-score Christian dogs
To serve the cruel drivers:
Some are fair beauties gently born,
And some rough coral-divers.
We hardy skimmers of the sea
Are lucky in each sally,
And, eighty strong, we send along
The dreaded Pirate Galley.

A nunnery was spied ashore,
We lowered away the cutter,
And, landing, seized the youngest nun
Ere she a cry could utter;

Beside the creek, deaf to our oars,
She slumbered in green alley,
As, eighty strong, we sent along
The dreaded Pirate Galley.

“Be silent, darling, you must come —
The wind is off shore blowing;
You only change your prison dull
For one that's splendid, glowing!
His Highness doats on milky cheeks,
So do not make us dally ”—
We, eighty strong, who send along
The dreaded Pirate Galley.

She sought to flee back to her cell,
And called us each a devil!
We dare do aught beomes Old Scratch,
But like a treatment civil,
In spite of buffet, prayers, and calls —
Too late her friends to rally —
We, eighty strong, bore her along
Unto the Pirate Galley.

The fairer for her tears profuse,
As dews refresh the flower,
She is well worth three purses full,
And will adorn the bower —
For vain her vow to pine and die
Thus torn from her dear valley:
She reigns, and we still row along
The dreaded Pirate Galley.

H. L. W.

THE TURKISH CAPTIVE

(*"Si je n' était captive."*)

OH! were I not a captive,
I should love this fair countree;
Those fields with maize abounding,
This ever-plaintive sea:
I'd love those stars unnumbered,
If, passing in the shade,
Beneath our walls I saw not
The spahi's sparkling blade.

I am no Tartar maiden
That a blackamoor of price
Should tune my lute and hold to me
My glass of sherbet-ice.
Far from these haunts of vices,
In dear my countree, we
With sweethearts in the even
May chat and wander free.

But still I love this climate,
Where never wintry breeze
Invades, with chilly murmur,
These open lattices;
Where rain is warm in summer,
And the insect glossy green,
Most like a living emerald,
Shines 'mid the leafy screen.

With her chapelles fair Smyrna —
A gay princess is she!
Still, at her summons round her
Unfading spring ye see.

And, as in beauteous vases,
Bright groups of flowers repose,
So, in her gulfs are lying
Her archipelagoes.

I love these tall red turrets;
These standards brave unrolled;
And, like an infant's playthings,
These houses decked with gold.
I love forsooth these reveries,
Though sandstorms make me pant,
Voluptuously swaying
Upon an elephant.

Here in this fairy palace,
Full of such melodies,
Methinks I hear deep murmurs
That in the deserts rise;
Soft mingling with the music
The Genii's voices pour,
Amid the air, unceasing,
Around us evermore.

I love the burning odours
This glowing region gives;
And, round each gilded lattice,
The trembling, wreathing leaves;
And, 'neath the bending palm-tree,
The gaily gushing spring;
And on the snow-white minaret,
The stork with snowier wing.

I love on mossy couch to sing
A Spanish roundelay,
And see my sweet companions
Around commingling gay,—

A roving band, light-hearted,
 In frolicsome array,—
 Who 'neath the screening parasols
 Dance down the merry day.

But more than all enchanting
 At night, it is to me,
 To sit, where winds are sighing,
 Lone, musing by the sea;
 And, on its surface gazing,
 To mark the moon so fair,
 Her silver fan outspreading,
 In trembling radiance there.

W. D., *Tait's Edin. Magazine.*

MOONLIGHT ON THE BOSPHORUS.

(“*La lune était sereine.*”)

BRIGHT shone the merry moonbeams dancing o'er the wave;
 At the cool casement, to the evening breeze flung wide,
 Leans the Sultana, and delights to watch the tide,
 With surge of silvery sheen, yon sleeping islets lave.

From her hand, as it falls, vibrates the light guitar.
 She listens — hark! that sound that echoes dull and low.
 Is it the beat upon the Archipelago
 Of some long galley's oar, from Scio bound afar?

Is it the cormorants, whose black wings, one by one,
 Cut the blue wave that o'er them breaks in liquid pearls?
 Is it some hovering sprite with whistling scream that hurls
 Down to the deep from yon old tower a loosened stone?

Who thus disturbs the tide near the seraglio?
 'Tis no dark cormorants that on the ripple float,
 'Tis no dull plunge of stone — no oars of Turkish boat,
 With measured beat along the water creeping slow.

'Tis heavy sacks, borne each by voiceless dusky slaves;
 And could you dare to sound the depths of yon dark tide,
 Something like human form would stir within its side.
 Bright shone the merry moonbeams dancing o'er the wave.

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.

THE VEIL

(“ *Qu'avez-vous, mes frères?* ”)

“ Have you prayed to-night, Desdemona? ”

THE SISTER.

WHAT has happened, my brothers? Your spirit to-day
 Some secret sorrow damps:
 There's a cloud on your brow. What has happened? Oh,
 say,
 For your eyeballs glare out with a sinister ray
 Like the light of funeral lamps.
 And the blades of your poinards are half unsheathed
 In your belt — and ye frown on me!
 There's a woe untold, there's a pang unbreathed
 In your bosom, my brothers three!

ELDEST BROTHER.

Gulnara, make answer! Hast thou, since the dawn,
 To the eye of a stranger thy veil withdrawn?

THE SISTER.

As I came, oh, my brother! at noon — from the bath —
 As I came — it was noon, my lords —
 And your sister had then, as she constantly hath,
 Drawn her veil close around her, aware that the path
 Is beset by these foreign hordes.
 But the weight of the noonday's sultry hour
 Near the mosque was so oppressive
 That — forgetting a moment the eye of the Giaour —
 I yielded to th' heat excessive.

SECOND BROTHER.

Gulnara, make answer! Whom, then, hast thou seen,
In a turban of white and a caftan of green?

THE SISTER.

Nay, *he* might have been there; but I muffled me so,
He could scarcely have seen my figure.—
But why to your sister thus dark do you grow?
What words to yourselves do you mutter thus low,
Of “blood” and “an intriguer”?
Oh! ye cannot of murder bring down the red guilt
On your souls, my brothers, surely!
Though I fear — from the hands that are chafing the hilt,
And the hints you give obscurely.

THIRD BROTHER.

Gulnara, this evening when sank the red sun,
Didst thou mark how like blood in descending it shone?

THE SISTER.

Mercy! Allah! have pity! oh, spare!
See! I cling to your knees repenting!
Kind brothers, forgive me! for mercy, forbear!
Be appeased at the cry of a sister's despair,
For our mother's sake relenting.
O God! must I die? They are deaf to my cries!
Their sister's life-blood shedding;
They have stabbed me each one — I faint — o'er my eyes
A *veil of Death* is spreading!

THE BROTHERS.

Gulnara, farewell! take *that* veil; 'tis the gift
Of thy brothers — a veil thou wilt never lift!

“FATHER PROUT” (FRANK S. MAHONY).

THE DERVISH

(“ *Un jour Ali passait.*”)

ALI came riding by — the highest head
Bent to the dust, o’charged with dread,
 Whilst “ God be praised ! ” all cried ;
But through the throng one dervish pressed,
Aged and bent, who dared arrest
 The pasha in his pride.

“ Ali Tepelini, light of all light,
Who hold’st the Divan’s upper seat by right,
 Whose fame Fame’s trump hath burst —
Thou art the master of unnumbered hosts,
Shade of the Sultan — yet he only boasts
 In thee a dog accurst !

“ An unseen tomb-torch flickers on thy path,
Whilst, as from vial full, thy spare-nought wrath
 Splashes this trembling race :
These are thy grass as thou their trenchant scythe,
Cleaving their neck as ’twere a willow withe —
 Their blood none can efface.

“ But ends thy tether ! for Janina makes
A grave for thee where every turret quakes,
 And thou shalt drop below
To where the spirits, to a tree enchained,
Will clutch thee, there to be ’mid them retained
 For all to-come in woe !

“ Or, if, by happy chance, thy soul might flee
Thy victims, after, thou shouldst surely see
 And hear thy crimes relate ;

Streaked with the guileless gore drained from their veins,
Greater in number than the reigns on reigns
Thou hopedst for thy state.

“This so will be! and neither fleet nor fort
Can stay or aid thee as the deathly port
Receives thy harried frame!
Though, like the cunning Hebrew knave of old,
To cheat the angel black, thou didst enfold
In altered guise thy name.”

Ali deemed anchorite or saint a pawn —
The crater of his blunderbus did yawn,
Sword, dagger hung at ease:
But he had let the holy man revile,
Though clouds o’erswept his brow; then, with a smile,
He tossed him his pelisse.

H. L. W.

THE LOST BATTLE.

(“*Allah! qui me rendra —*”)

OH, Allah! who will give me back my terrible array?
My emirs and my cavalry that shook the earth to-day;
My tent, my wide-extending camp, all dazzling to the sight,
Whose watchfires, kindled numberless beneath the brow of
night,
Seemed oft unto the sentinel that watched the midnight hours,
As heaven along the sombre hill had rained its stars in
showers?
Where are my beys so gorgeous, in their light pelisses gay,
And where my fierce Timariot bands, so fearless in the fray;
My dauntless khans, my spahis brave, swift thunderbolts of
war;
My sunburnt Bedouins, trooping from the Pyramids afar,

Who laughed to see the labouring hind stand terrified at gaze,
And urged their desert horses on amid the ripening maize?
These horses with their fiery eyes, their slight untiring feet,
That flew along the fields of corn like grasshoppers so fleet —
What! to behold again no more, loud charging o'er the plain,
Their squadrons, in the hostile shot diminished all in vain,
Burst grandly on the heavy squares, like clouds that bear the
storms,

Enveloping in lightning fires the dark resisting swarms!
Oh! they are dead! their housings bright are trailed amid their
gore;

Dark blood is on their manes and sides, all deeply clotted o'er;
All vainly now the spur would strike these cold and rounded
flanks,

To wake them to their wonted speed amid the rapid ranks:
Here the bold riders red and stark upon the sands lie down,
Who in their friendly shadows slept throughout the halt at
noon.

Oh, Allah! who will give me back my terrible array?
See where it straggles 'long the fields for leagues on leagues
away,

Like riches from a spendthrift's hand flung prodigal to earth.
Lo! steed and rider; — Tartar chiefs or of Arabian birth,
Their turbans and their cruel course, their banners and their
cries,

Seem now as if a troubled dream had passed before mine
eyes —

My valiant warriors and their steeds, thus doomed to fall and
bleed!

Their voices rouse no echo now, their footsteps have no speed;
They sleep, and have forgot at last the sabre and the bit —
Yon vale, with all the corpses heaped, seems one wide charnel-
pit.

Long shall the evil omen rest upon this plain of dread —
To-night, the taint of solemn blood; to-morrow, of the dead.
Alas! 'tis but a shadow now, that noble armament!

How terribly they strove, and struck from morn to eve unspent,

Amid the fatal fiery ring, enamoured of the fight!

Now o'er the dim horizon sinks the peaceful pall of night:

The brave have nobly done their work, and calmly sleep at last.

The crows begin, and o'er the dead are gathering dark and fast;

Already through their feathers black they pass their eager beaks.

Forth from the forest's distant depth, from bald and barren peaks,

They congregate in hungry flocks and rend their gory prey.

Woe to that flaunting army's pride, so vaunting yesterday!

That formidable host, alas! is coldly nerveless now

To drive the vulture from his gorge, or scare the carrion crow.

Were now that host again mine own, with banner broad unfurled,

With it I would advance and win the empire of the world.

Monarchs to it should yield their realms and veil their haughty brows;

My sister it should ever be, my lady and my spouse.

Oh! what will unrestoring Death, that jealous tyrant lord,

Do with the brave departed souls that cannot swing a sword?

Why turned the balls aside from me? Why struck no hostile hand

My head within its turban green upon the ruddy sand?

I stood all potent yesterday; my bravest captains three,

All stirless in their tigered selle, magnificent to see,

Hailed as before my gilded tent rose flowing to the gales,

Shorn from the tameless desert steeds, three dark and tossing tails.

But yesterday a hundred drums were heard when I went by;

Full forty agas turned their looks respectful on mine eye,

And trembled with contracted brows within their hall of state.

Instead of heavy catapults, of slow unwieldy weight,

I had bright cannons rolling on oak wheels in threatening
 tiers,
 And calm and steady by their sides marched English cannon-
 iers.
 But yesterday, and I had towns, and castles strong and high,
 And Greeks in thousands, for the base and merciless to buy.
 But yesterday, and arsenals and harems were my own;
 While now, defeated and proscribed, deserted and alone,
 I flee away, a fugitive, and of my former power,
 Allah. I have not now at least one battlemented tower.
 And must he fly — the grand vizier! the pasha of three tails!
 O'er the horizon's bounding hills, where distant vision fails,
 All stealthily, with eyes on earth, and shrinking from the
 sight,
 As a nocturnal robber holds his dark and breathless flight,
 And thinks he sees the gibbet spread its arms in solemn wrath,
 In every tree that dimly throws its shadow on his path!

Thus, after his defeat, pale Reschid speaks,
 Among the dead we mourned a thousand Greeks.
 Lone from the field the Pasha fled afar,
 And musing, wiped his reeking scimitar;
 His two dead steeds upon the sands were flung,
 And on their sides their empty stirrups hung.

W. D., *Bentley's Miscellany*, 1839.

ZARA, THE BATHER

(“*Sara, belle d'indolence.*”)

IN a swinging hammock lying,
 Lightly flying,
 Zara, lovely indolent,
 O'er a fountain's crystal wave
 There to lave
 Her young beauty — see her bent.

As she leans, so sweet and soft,
 Flitting oft,
O'er the mirror to and fro,
 Seems that airy floating bat
 Like a feather
From some sea-gull's wing of snow.

Every time the frail boat laden
 With the maiden
Skims the water in its flight,
 Starting from its trembling sheen,
 Swift are seen
A white foot and neck so white.

As that lithe foot's timid tips
 Quick she dips,
Passing, in the rippling pool,
 (Blush, oh! snowiest ivory!)
 Frolic, she
Laughs to feel the pleasant cool.

Here displayed, but half concealed —
 Half revealed,
Each bright charm shall you behold,
 In her innocence emerging,
 As a-verging
On the wave her hands grow cold.

For no star howe'er divine
 Has the shine
Of a maid's pure loveliness,
 Frightened if a leaf but quivers
 As she shivers,
Veiled with nought but dripping trees.

By the happy breezes fanned
 See her stand,—

Blushing like a living rose,
On her bosom swelling high
If a fly
Dare to seek a sweet repose.

In those eyes which maiden pride
Fain would hide,
Mark how passion's lightnings sleep!
And their glance is brighter far
Than the star
Brightest in heaven's bluest deep.

O'er her limbs the glittering current
In soft torrent
Rains adown the gentle girl,
As if, drop by drop, should fall,
One and all
From her necklace every pearl.

Lengthening still the reckless pleasure
At her leisure,
Care-free Zara ever slow
As the hammock floats and swings
Smiles and sings,
To herself, so sweet and low.

"Oh, were I a capitana,
Or sultana,
Amber should be always mixt
In my bath of jewelled stone,
Near my throne,
Griffins twain of gold betwixt.

"Then my hammock should be silk,
White as milk;
And, more soft than down of dove,
Velvet cushions where I sit
Should emit
Perfumes that inspire love.

“Then should I, no danger near,
Free from fear,
Revel in my garden's stream;
Nor amid the shadows deep
Dread the peep
Of two dark eyes' kindling gleam.

“He who thus would play the spy,
On the die
For such sight his head must throw;
In his blood the sabre naked
Would be slakéd,
Of my slaves of ebon brow.

Then my rich robes trailing show
As I go,
None to chide should be so bold;
And upon my sandals fine
How should shine
Rubies worked in cloth-of-gold!”

Fancying herself a queen,
All unseen,
Thus vibrating in delight;
In her indolent coquetting
Quite forgetting
How the hours wing their flight.

As she lists the showery tinkling
Of the sprinkling
By her wanton curvets made,
Never pauses she to think
Of the brink
Where her wrapper white is laid.

To the harvest-fields the while,
In long file,

Speed her sisters' lively band,
 Like a flock of birds in flight
 Streaming light,
 Dancing onward hand in hand.

And they're singing, every one,
 As they run;
 This the burden of their lay:
 "Fie upon such idleness!
 Not to dress
 Earlier on harvest-day!"

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.

EXPECTATION

(*"Monte, écureuil."*)

SQUIRREL, mount yon oak so high,
 To its twig that next the sky
 Bends and trembles as a flower!
 Strain, O stork, thy pinion well,—
 From thy nest 'neath old church-bell,
 Mount to yon tall citadel,
 And its tallest donjon tower!
 To your mountain, eagle old,
 Mount, whose brow so white and cold,
 Kisses the last ray of even!
 And, O thou that lov'st to mark
 Morn's first sunbeam pierce the dark,
 Mount, O mount, thou joyous lark —
 Joyous lark, O mount to heaven!
 And now say, from topmost bough,
 Towering shaft, and peak of snow,
 And heaven's arch — O, can you see
 One white plume that like a star,

Streams along the plain afar,
And a steed that from the war
Bears my lover back to me?

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.

THE LOVER'S WISH

(*"Si j'étais la feuille."*)

OH! were I the leaf that the wind of the West,
His course through the forest uncaring;
To sleep on the gale or the wave's placid breast
In a pendulous cradle is bearing.

All fresh with the morn's balmy kiss would I haste,
As the dewdrops upon me were glancing;
When Aurora sets out on the roseate waste,
And round her the breezes are dancing.

On the pinions of air I would fly, I would rush
Thro' the glens and the valleys to quiver;
Past the mountain ravine, past the grove's dreamy hush,
And the murmuring fall of the river.

By the darkening hollow and bramble-bush lane,
To catch the sweet breath of the roses;
Past the land would I speed, where the sand-driven plain
'Neath the heat of the noonday reposes.

Past the rocks that uprear their tall forms to the sky,
Whence the storm-fiend his anger is pouring;
Past lakes that lie dead, tho' the tempest roll nigh,
And the turbulent whirlwind be roaring.

On, on would I fly, till a charm stopped my way,
A charm that would lead to the bower;
Where the daughter of Araby sings to the day,
At the dawn and the vesper hour.

Then hovering down on her brow would I light,
 'Midst her golden tresses entwining;
 That gleam like the corn when the fields are bright,
 And the sunbeams upon it shining.

A single frail gem on her beautiful head,
 I should sit in the golden glory;
 And prouder I'd be than the diadem spread
 Round the brow of kings famous in story.

V., *Eton Observer*.

THE SACKING OF THE CITY

(“ *La flamme par ton ordre, O roi!* ”)

THY will, O King, is done! Lighting but to consume,
 The roar of the fierce flames drowned even the shouts and
 shrieks;

Reddening each roof, like some day-dawn of bloody doom,
 Seemed they in joyous flight to dance about their wrecks.

Slaughter his thousand giant arms hath tossed on high,
 Fell fathers, husbands, wives, beneath his streaming steel;
 Prostrate, the palaces, huge tombs of fire, lie,
 While gathering overhead the vultures scream and wheel!

Died the pale mothers, and the virgins, from their arms,
 O Caliph, fiercely torn, bewailed their young years' blight;
 With stabs and kisses fouled, all their yet quivering charms,
 At our fleet coursers' heels were dragged in mocking flight.

Lo! where the city lies mantled in pall of death;
 Lo! where thy mighty hand hath passed, all things must
 bend!

Priests prayed, the sword estopped blaspheming breath,
 Vainly their cheating book for shield did they extend.

Some infants yet survived, and the unsated steel
Still drinks the life-blood of each whelp of Christian-kind,
To kiss thy sandall'd foot, O King, thy people kneel,
And golden circlets to thy victor-ankle bind.

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.

THE DJINNS

(*"Murs, ville et port."*)

Town, tower,
Shore, deep,
Where lower
Cliffs steep;
Waves grey,
Where play
Winds gay,
All sleep.

Hark! a sound,
Far and slight,
Breathes around
On the night:
High and higher,
Nigh and nigher,
Like a fire,
Roaring, bright.

Now, on 'tis sweeping
With rattling beat,
Like dwarf imp leaping
In gallop fleet:
He flies, he prances,
In frolic fancies,
On wave-crest dances
With pattering feet.

Hark, the rising swell,
 With each new burst!
 Like the tolling bell
 Of a convent curst;
 Like the billowy roar
 On a storm-lashed shore,—
 Now hushed, but once more
 Maddening to its worst.

O God! the deadly sound
 Of the Djinn's fearful cry:
 Quick, 'neath the spiral round
 Of the deep staircase fly!
 See, see our lamplight fade!
 And of the balustrade
 Mounts, mounts the circling shade
 Up to the ceiling high!

'Tis the Djinns' wild streaming swarm
 Whistling in their tempest flight;
 Snap the tall yews 'neath the storm;
 Like a pine flame crackling bright.
 Swift though heavy, lo! their crowd
 Through the heavens rushing loud
 Like a livid thunder-cloud
 With its bolt of fiery might!

Ho! they are on us, close without!
 Shut tight the shelter where we lie!
 With hideous din the monster rout,
 Dragon and vampire, fill the sky!
 The loosened rafter overhead
 Trembles and bends like quivering reed;
 Shakes the old door with shuddering dread,
 As from its rusty hinge 'twould fly!
 Wild cries of hell! voices that howl and shriek!
 The horrid troop before the tempest tossed —
 O Heaven! — descends my lowly roof to seek:

Bends the strong wall beneath the furious host.
Totters the house as though, like dry leaf shorn
From autumn bough and on the mad blast borne,
Up from its deep foundations it were torn
To join the stormy whirl. Ah! all is lost!

O Prophet! if thy hand but now
Save from these hellish things,
A pilgrim at thy shrine I'll bow,
Laden with pious offerings.
Bid their hot breath its fiery rain
Stream on the faithful's door in vain; .
Vainly upon my blackened pane
Grate the fierce claws of their dark wings!

They have passed! — and their wild legion
Cease to thunder at my door;
Fleeting through night's rayless region,
Hither they return no more.
Clanking chains and sounds of woe
Fill the forests as they go;
And the tall oaks cower low,
Bent their flaming light before.

On! on! the storm of wings
Bears far the fiery fear,
Till scarce the breeze now brings
Dim murmurings to the ear;
Like locusts' humming hail,
Or thrash of tiny flail
Plied by the fitful gale
On some old roof-tree sere.

Fainter now are borne
Feeble mutterings still;
'As when Arab horn
Swells its magic peal,

POEMS

Shoreward o'er the deep
Fairy voices sweep,
And the infant's sleep
Golden visions fill.

Each deadly Djinn,
Dark child of fright,
Of death and sin,
Speeds in wild flight.
Hark, the dull moan,
Like the deep tone
Of Ocean's groan
Afar, by night!

More and more
Fades it slow,
'As on shore
Ripples flow,—
'As the plaint
Far and faint
Of a saint
Murmured low.

Hark! hist!
Around,
I list!
The bounds
Of space
All trace
Efface
Of sound.

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.



"Be a Christian, noble King!
For it were a grievous thing
Love to seek and find too well
In the arms of infidel."

Poems: The Obdurate Beauty Page 67.



THE OBDURATE BEAUTY

(“ *A Juana la Grenadine!* ”)

To Juana ever gay,
Sultan Achmet spoke one day:
“Lo, the realms that kneel to own
Homage to my sword and crown
All I'd freely cast away,
Maiden dear, for thee alone.”

“Be a Christian, noble King!
For it were a grievous thing:
Love to seek and find too well
In the arms of infidel.
Spain with cry of shame would ring,
If from honour faithful fell.

“By these pearls whose spotless chain,
Oh, my gentle sovereign,
Clasps thy neck of ivory,
Aught thou askest I will be,
If that necklace pure of stain
Thou wilt give for rosary.”

JOHN L. O'SULLIVAN.

CORNFLOWERS

(“ *Tandis que l'étoile inodore.* ”)

WHILE bright but scentless azure stars
Be-gem the golden corn,
And spangle with their skyey tint
The furrows not yet shorn;

While still the pure white tufts of May,
Are each a snowy ball,—
Away, ye merry maids, and haste
To gather ere they fall!

Nowhere the sun of Spain outshines
Upon a fairer plain
Than Peñafiel's, or bestows
More wealth of grass and grain.
Nowhere a broader square reflects
Such brilliant mansions, tall,—
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

Nowhere a statelier abbey rears
Dome huger o'er a shrine,
Though seek ye from old Rome itself
To even Seville fine.
Here countless pilgrims come to pray
And promenade the Mall,—
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

Where glide the girls more joyfully
Than ours who dance at dusk,
With roses white upon their brows,
With waists that scorn the busk?
Mantillas elsewhere hide dull eyes —
Compared with these, how small!
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

A blossom in a city lane,
Alizia was our pride,
And oft the blundering bee, deceived,
Came buzzing to her side —
But, oh! for one that felt the sting,
And found, 'neath honey, gall —
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

Young, haughty, from still hotter lands,
A stranger hither came —
Was he a Moor or African,
Or Murcian known to fame?
None knew — least, she — or false or true,
By what name him to call.
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

Alizia asked not his degree,
She saw him but as Love,
And through Xarama's vale they strayed,
And tarried in the grove,—
Oh! curses on that fatal eve,
And on that leafy hall!
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

The darkened city breathed no more;
The moon was mantled long,
Till towers thrust the cloudy cloak
Upon the steeples' throng;
The crossway Christ, in ivy draped,
Shrank, grieving, 'neath the pall,—
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

But while, alone, they kept the shade,
The other dark-eyed dears
Were murmuring on the stifling air
Their jealous threats and fears;
Alizia was so blamed, that time,
Unheeded rang the call:
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

Although, above, the hawk describes
The circle round the lark,
It sleeps, unconscious, and our lass
Had eyes but for her spark —
A spark? — a sun! 'Twas Juan, King!
Who wears our coronal,—
Away, ye merry maids, &c.

A love so far above one's state
 Ends sadly. Came a black
 And guarded palanquin to bear
 The girl that ne'er comes back;
 By royal writ, some nunnery
 Still shields her from us all:
 Away, ye merry maids, and haste
 To gather ere they fall!

H. L. W.

THE DANUBE IN WRATH

(*"Quoi! ne pouvez-vous vivre ensemble?"*)

The River Deity upbraids his Daughters, the contributory Streams:—

YE daughters mine! will naught abate
 Your fierce interminable hate?
 Still am I doomed to rue the fate
 That such unfriendly neighbours made?
 The while ye might, in peaceful cheer,
 Mirror upon your waters clear,
 Semlin! thy Gothic steeples dear,
 And thy bright minarets, Belgrade!

Fraser's Magazine.

OLD OCEAN

(*"J'étais seul près des flots."*)

I stood by the waves, while the stars soared in sight,
 Not a cloud specked the sky, not a sail shimmered bright;
 Scenes beyond this dim world were revealed to mine eye;
 And the woods, and the hills, and all nature around,
 Seem'd to question with moody, mysterious sound,
 The waves, and the pure stars on high.

And the clear constellations, that infinite throng,
 While thousand rich harmonies swelled in their song,
 Replying, bowed meekly their diamond-blaze —
 And the blue waves, which nothing may bind or arrest,
 Chorus'd forth, as they stooped the white foam of their crest:
 "Creator! we bless thee and praise!"

R. C. ELLWOOD.

NAPOLEON

(*"Tu domines notre âge; ange ou démon, qu'importe!"*)

ANGEL or demon! thou,— whether of light
 The minister, or darkness — still dost sway
 This age of ours; thine eagle's soaring flight
 Bears us, all breathless, after it away.
 The eye that from thy presence fain would stray,
 Shuns thee in vain; thy mighty shadow thrown
 Rests on all pictures of the living day,
 And on the threshold of our time alone,
 Dazzling, yet sombre, stands thy form, Napoleon!

Thus, when the admiring stranger's steps explore
 The subject-lands that 'neath Vesuvius be,
 Whether he wind along the enchanting shore
 To Portici from fair Parthenope,
 Or, lingering long in dreamy reverie,
 O'er loveliest Ischia's od'rous isle he stray,
 Wooed by whose breath the soft and am'rous sea
 Seems like some languishing sultana's lay,
 A voice for very sweets that scarce can win its way.

Him, whether Pæstum's solemn fane detain,
 Shrouding his soul with meditation's power;
 Or at Pozzuoli, to the sprightly strain
 Of tarantella danced 'neath Tuscan tower,

Listening, he while away the evening hour;
Or wake the echoes, mournful, lone and deep,
Of that sad city, in its dreaming bower
By the volcano seized, where mansions keep
The likeness which they wore at that last fatal sleep;

Or be his bark at Posillipo laid,
While as the swarthy boatman at his side
Chants Tasso's lays to Virgil's pleas'd shade,
Ever he sees, throughout that circuit wide,
From shaded nook or sunny lawn espied,
From rocky headland viewed, or flow'ry shore,
From sea, and spreading mead alike descried,
The Giant Mount, tow'ring all objects o'er,
And black'ning with its breath th' horizon evermore!
Fraser's Magazine.

LES FEUILLES D'AUTOMNE.—1831

THE PATIENCE OF THE PEOPLE

(“ *Il s'est dit tant de fois.*”)

HOW often have the people said: What's power?
Who reigns soon is dethroned? each fleeting hour
Has onward borne, as in a fevered dream,
Such quick reverses, like a judge supreme —
Austere but just, they contemplate the end
To which the current of events must tend.
Self-confidence has taught them to forbear,
And in the vastness of their strength, they spare.
Armed with impunity, for *one in vain*
Resists a *nation*, they let others reign.

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

DICTATED BEFORE THE RHONE GLACIER

(“ *Souvent quand mon esprit riche.*”)

WHEN my mind, on the ocean of poesy hurled,
Floats on in repose round this wonderful world,
Oft the sacred fire from heaven —
Mysterious sun, that gives light to the soul —
Strikes mine with its ray, and above the pole
Its upward course is driven,

Like a wandering cloud, then, my eager thought
Capriciously flies, to no guidance brought,
 With every quarter's wind,
It regards from those radiant vaults on high,
Earth's cities below, and again doth fly,
 And leaves but its shadow behind.

In the glistening gold of the morning bright,
It shines, detaching some lance of light,
 Or, as warrior's armour rings;
It forages forests that ferment around,
Or bathed in the sun-red gleams is found,
 Where the west its radiance flings.

Or, on mountain peak, that rears its head
Where snow-clad Alps around are spread,
 By furious gale 'tis thrown.
From the yawning abyss see the cloud scud away,
And the glacier appears, with its multiform ray,
 The giant mountain's crown!

Like Parnassian pinnacle yet to be scaled,
In its form from afar, by the aspirant hailed;
 On its side the rainbow plays,
And at eve, when the shadow sinks sleeping below,
The last slanting ray on its crest of snow
 Makes its cap like a crater to blaze.

In the darkness, its front seems some pale orb of light,
The chamois with fear flashes on in its flight,
 The eagle afar is driven;
The deluge but roars in despair to its feet,
And scarce dare the eye its aspect to meet,
 So near doth it rise to heaven.
Alone on these altitudes, feeling no fear,
Forgetful of earth, my spirit draws near,
 On the starry vault to gaze,

And nearer, to gaze on those glories of night,
On th' horizon high heaving, like arches of light,
Till again the sun shall blaze.

For then will the glacier with glory be graced,
On its prisms will light streaked with darkness be placed,
The morn its echoes greet;
Like a torrent it falls on the ocean of life,
Like Chaos unformed, with the sea-stormy strife,
When waters on waters meet.

'As the spirit of poesy touches my thought,
It is thus my ideas in a circle are brought,
From earth, with the waters of pain.
'As under a sunbeam a cloud ascends,
These fly to the heavens — their course never ends,
But descend to the ocean again.

Author of "Critical Essays."

THE POET'S LOVE FOR LIVELINESS

("Moi, quelque soit le monde.")

For me, whate'er my life and lot may show,
Years blank with gloom or cheered by mem'ry's glow,
Turmoil or peace; ne'er be it mine, I pray,
To be a dweller of the peopled earth,
Save 'neath a roof alive with children's mirth
Loud through the livelong day.

So, if my hap it be to see once more
Those scenes my footsteps tottered in before,
An infant follower in Napoleon's train:
Rodrigo's holds, Valencia and Leon,
And both Castiles, and mated Aragon;
Ne'er be it mine, O Spain!

To pass thy plains with cities scant between,
 Thy stately arches flung o'er deep ravine,
 Thy palaces, of Moor's or Roman's time;
 Or the swift snakings of thy Guadalquiver,
 Save in those gilded cars, where bells forever
 Ring their melodious chime.

Fraser's Magazine.

RELEASED

(*"Quand le livre ou s'endort."*)

WHAT time dull books have drowsed my mind at even,
 What time my room's hot air's nigh stifling grown,
 What time the town's monotonous hum hath striven
 All day to hush all spirit of song with moan,—

What time the countless cares of toil or pleasure
 Which make the narrow circle of our days,
 Have touched once more, at length, their utmost measure,
 Until to-morrow's dawn renew their race,—

No moment my poor soul, released, delayeth;
 But, as a bird might flutter to its nest
 After long capture, blithely so it strayeth,
 Though wingless, weak, on yet diviner quest.

To the woods it hies, and there, deep in the gloaming
 Just thrilled with the moon's first melodies and rays,
 Finds Reverie, loved comrade of its roaming
 Through what delightful faery-haunted ways!

N. R. T.

INFANTILE INFLUENCE

(*"Lorsque l'enfant paraît."*)

THE child comes toddling in, and young and old
With smiling eyes its smiling eyes behold,
And artless, babyish joy;
A playful welcome greets it through the room,
The saddest brow unfolds its wrinkled gloom,
To greet the happy boy.

If June with flowers has spangled all the ground,
Or winter bleak the flickering hearth around
Draws close the circling seat;
The child still sheds a never-failing light;
We call; Mamma with mingled joy and fright
Watches its tottering feet.

Perhaps at eve as round the fire we draw,
We speak of heaven, or poetry, or law,
Or politics, or prayer;
The child comes in, 'tis now all smiles and play,
Farewell to grave discourse and poet's lay,
Philosophy and care.

When fancy wakes, but sense in heaviest sleep
Lies steeped, and like the sobs of them that weep
The dark stream sinks and swells,
The dawn, like Pharos gleaming o'er the sea,
Bursts forth, and sudden wakes the minstrelsy
Of birds and chiming bells;

Thou art my dawn; my soul is as the field,
Where sweetest flowers their balmy perfumes yield
When breathed upon by thee,
Of forest, where thy voice like zephyr plays,
And morn pours out its flood of golden rays,
When thy sweet smile I see.

Oh, sweetest eyes, like founts of liquid blue;
 And little hands that evil never knew,
 Pure as the new-formed snow;
 Thy feet are still unstained by this world's mire,
 Thy golden locks like aureole of fire
 Circle thy cherub brow!

Dove of our ark, thine angel spirit flies
 On azure wings forth from thy beaming eyes.
 Though weak thine infant feet,
 What strange amaze this new and strange world gives
 To thy sweet virgin soul, that spotless lives
 In virgin body sweet.

Oh, gentle face, radiant with happy smile,
 And eager prattling tongue that knows no guile,
 Quick changing tears and bliss;
 Thy soul expands to catch this new world's light,
 Thy mazéd eyes to drink each wondrous sight,
 Thy lips to taste the kiss.

Oh, God! bless me and mine, and these I love,
 And e'en my foes that still triumphant prove
 Victors by force or guile;
 A flowerless summer may we never see,
 Or nest of bird bereft, or hive of bee,
 Or home of infant's smile.

HENRY HIGHTON, M.A.

THE WATCHING ANGEL

(*" Dans l'alcôve sombre."*)

IN the dusky nook,
 Near the altar laid,
 Sleeps the child in shadow
 Of his mother's bed:

Softly he reposes,
And his lid of roses,
Closed to earth, uncloses
On the heaven o'erhead.

Many a dream is with him,
Fresh from fairyland,
Spangled o'er with diamonds
Seems the ocean sand;
Suns are flaming there,
Troops of ladies fair
Souls of infants bear
In each charming hand.

Oh, enchanting vision!
Lo, a rill upsprings,
And from out its bosom
Comes a voice that sings.
Lovelier there appear
Sire and sisters dear,
While his mother near
Plumes her new-born wings.

But a brighter vision
Yet his eyes behold;
Roses pied and lilies
Every path enfold;
Lakes delicious sleeping,
Silver fishes leaping,
Through the wavelets creeping
Up to reeds of gold.

Slumber on, sweet infant,
Slumber peacefully;
Thy young soul yet knows not
What thy lot may be.

Like dead weeds that sweep
O'er the dol'rous deep,
Thou art borne in sleep.
What is all to thee?

Thou canst slumber by the way ;
Thou hast learnt to borrow
Nought from study, nought from care ;
The cold hand of sorrow
On thy brow unwrinkled yet,
Where young truth and candour sit,
Ne'er with rugged nail hath writ
That sad word, " To-morrow ! "

Innocent ! thou sleepest —
See the angelic band,
Who foreknow the trials
That for man are planned ;
Seeing him unarmed,
Unfearing, unalarmed,
With their tears have warmed
This unconscious hand.

Still they, hovering o'er him,
Kiss him where he lies.
Hark ! he sees them weeping,
" Gabriel ! " he cries ;
" Hush ! " the angel says,
On his lip he lays
One finger, one displays
His native skies.

Foreign Quarterly Review.

THE LOVE-DAWN

(*"Madame, autour de vous."*)

LADY, such spirit of sense is yours to entrance
Men's souls; your song's so sweet, and, when you dance,
Hearts so for bliss beat higher;
So lovely is the light no summer skies
Contain, the dew of pity in your deep eyes,
Of love the sunnier fire,—

That when you deign, young Star than heaven's more bright,
To lighten with one glorious smile the night
Whose shadow round us clingeth,
As in the forest dark the bird ere morn,
A tender thought, in bowers yet darker born,
Trembles, till blithely it singeth.

Too holy art thou, too heavenly sweet to hear it;
An angel-woven veil enfolds thy spirit,
Love soon shall draw apart;
And then, as now, the angel watching thee
Will smile Love's rosy blush of dawn to see
In the pure heaven, thy heart!

N. R. T.

SUNSET

(*"Le soleil s'est couché."*)

THE sun set this evening in masses of cloud,
The storm comes to-morrow, then calm be the night,
Then the Dawn in her chariot refulgent and proud,
Then more nights, and still days, steps of Time in his
flight.

The days shall pass rapid as swifts on the wing,
 O'er the face of the hills, o'er the face of the seas,
 O'er streamlets of silver, and forests that ring
 With a dirge for the dead, chanted low by the breeze;
 The face of the waters, the brow of the mounts
 Deep scared but not shrivelled, and woods tufted green,
 Their youth shall renew; and the rocks to the founts
 Shall yield what these yielded to ocean their queen.
 But day by day bending still lower my head,
 Still chilled in the sunlight, soon I shall have cast,
 At height of the banquet, my lot with the dead,
 Unmissed by creation aye joyous and vast.

TORU DUTT.

PRAYER

(*"Ma fille, va prier!"*)

I.

COME, child, to prayer; the busy day is done,
 A golden star gleams through the dusk of night;
 The hills are trembling in the rising mist,
 The rumbling wain looms dim upon the sight;
 All things wend home to rest; the road-side trees
 Shake off their dust, stirred by the evening breeze.

The sparkling stars gush forth in sudden blaze,
 As twilight open flings the doors of night;
 The fringe of carmine narrows in the west,
 The rippling waves are tipped with silver light;
 The bush, the path — all blend in one dull grey;
 The doubtful traveller gropes his anxious way.

Oh, day! with toil, with wrong, with hatred rife;
 Oh, blessed night! with sober calmness sweet,
 The sad winds moaning through the ruined tower,
 The age-worn hind, the sheep's sad broken bleat —

All nature groans opprest with toil and care,
And wearied craves for rest, and love, and prayer.

At eve the babes with angels converse hold,

While we to our strange pleasures wend our way,
Each with its little face upraised to heaven,

With folded hands, barefoot kneels down to pray,
At self-same hour with self-same words they call
On God, the common Father of them all.

And then they sleep, and golden dreams anon,

Born as the busy day's last murmurs die,
In swarms tumultuous flitting through the gloom
Their breathing lips and golden locks descry.
And as the bees o'er bright flowers joyous roam,
Around their curtained cradles clustering come.

Oh, prayer of childhood! simple, innocent;

Oh, infant slumbers! peaceful, pure, and light,

Oh, happy worship! ever gay with smiles,

Meet prelude to the harmonies of night;
As birds beneath the wing enfold their head,
Nestled in prayer the infant seeks its bed.

HENRY HIGHTON, M.A.

II.

To prayer, my child! and O, be thy first prayer

For her who, many nights, with anxious care,

Rocked thy first cradle; who took thy infant soul

From heaven and gave it to the world; then rife

With love, still drank herself the gall of life,

And left for thy young lips the honied bowl.

And then — I need it more — then pray for me!

For she is gentle, artless, true like thee; —

She has a guileless heart, brow placid still;

Pity she has for all, envy for none;

Gentle and wise, she patiently lives on;

And she endures, nor knows who does the ill.

In culling flowers, her novice hand has ne'er
Touched e'en the outer rind of vice; no snare
With smiling show has lured her steps aside;
On her the past has left no staining mark;
Nor knows she aught of those bad thoughts which, dark
Like shade on waters, o'er the spirit glide.

She knows not — nor mayst thou — the miseries
In which our spirits mingle: vanities,
Remorse, soul-gnawing cares, Pleasure's false show;
Passions which float upon the heart like foam,
Bitter remembrances which o'er us come,
And Shame's red spot spread sudden o'er the brow.

I know life better! when thou'rt older grown
I'll tell thee — it is needful to be known —
Of the pursuit of wealth — art, power; the cost,
That it is folly, nothingness: that shame
For glory is oft thrown us in the game
Of Fortune; chances where the soul is lost.

The soul will change. Although of everything
The cause and end be clear, yet wildering
We roam through life (of vice and error full).
We wander as we go; we feel the load
Of doubt; and to the briars upon the road
Man leaves his virtue, as the sheep its wool.

Then go, go pray for me! And as the prayer
Gushes in words, be this the form they bear: —
“Lord, Lord, our Father! God, my prayer attend;
Pardon! Thou art good! Pardon — Thou art great!”
Let them go freely forth, fear not their fate!
Where thy soul sends them, thitherward they tend.

There's nothing here below which does not find
Its tendency. O'er plains the rivers wind,
And reach the sea; the bee, by instinct driven,

Finds out the honied flowers ; the eagle flies
To seek the sun ; the vulture where death lies ;
The swallow to the spring ; the prayer to Heaven !

And when thy voice is raised to God for me,
I'm like the slave whom in the vale we see
Seated to rest, his heavy load laid by ;
I feel refreshed — the load of faults and woe
Which, groaning, I drag with me as I go,
Thy wingéd prayer bears off rejoicingly !

Pray for thy father ! that his dreams be bright
With visitings of angel forms of light,
And his soul burn as incense flaming wide.
Let thy pure breath all his dark sins efface,
So that his heart be like that holy place,
An altar pavement each eve purified !

C., Tait's Magazine.

SONGS OF YOUTH

("Avant que mes chansons.")

ERE yet my youthful songs beloved,
Tender and true, keen pangs had proved
Of the base world's ingratitude,
Far from the bitter blasts of reason,
How bloomed they in how bright a season
With sweetest scents and rays endued !

From singing branches of life's tree,
With a weird ghostly melody,
Now, ere wild winter's come, they're riven.
East, South, North, West, they're whirled and scattered,
Each petal pure with mud bespattered,
By wind or water drown'd or driven.

Whilst I, whose brow, methought, should be
With leaf and bloom perpetually
Adorn'd, watch their wild dance i' the air;
Till lo, I'm turned from looking after,
Hearing the dull world's mocking laughter
Around the sighing branches bare!

N. R. T.

LES CHANTS DU CREPUSCULE.—1835

PRELUDE TO "THE SONGS OF TWILIGHT"

(*"De quel nom te nommer?"*)

HOW shall I note thee, line of troubled years,
Which mark existence in our little span?
One constant twilight in the heaven appears —
One constant twilight in the mind of man!

Creed, hope, anticipation and despair,
Are but a mingling, as of day and night;
The globe, surrounded by deceptive air,
Is all enveloped in the same half-light.

And voice is deadened by the evening breeze,
The shepherd's song, or maiden's in her bower,
Mix with the rustling of the neighbouring trees,
Within whose foliage is lulled the power.

Yet all unites! The winding path that leads
Thro' fields where verdure meets the trav'ler's eye,
The river's margin, blurred with wavy reeds,
The muffled anthem, echoing to the sky!

The ivy smothering the arméd tower;
The dying wind that mocks the pilot's ear;
The lordly equipage at midnight hour,
Draws into danger in a fog the peer;

The votaries of Satan or of Jove;
 The wretched mendicant absorbed in woe;
 The din of multitudes that onward move;
 The voice of conscience in the heart below;

The waves, which Thou, O Lord, alone canst still;
 Th' elastic air; the streamlet on its way;
 And all that man projects, or sovereigns will;
 Or things inanimate might seem to say;

The strain of gondolier slow streaming by;
 The lively barks that o'er the waters bound;
 The trees that shake their foliage to the sky;
 The wailing voice that fills the cots around;

And man, who studies with an aching heart —
 For now, when smiles are rarely deemed sincere,
 In vain the sceptic bids his doubts depart —
 Those doubts at length will arguments appear!

Hence, reader, know the subject of my song —
 A mystic age, resembling twilight gloom,
 Wherein we smile at birth, or bear along,
 With noiseless steps, a victim to the tomb!

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

THE LAND OF FABLE

(“ *L'Orient! qu'y voyez-vous, poètes?* ”)

Now, vot'ries of the Muses, turn your eyes,
 Unto the East, and say what there appears!
 “Alas!” the voice of Poesy replies,
 “Mystic's that light between the hemispheres!”

“ Yes, dread’s the mystic light in yonder heaven —
 Dull is the gleam behind the distant hill;
 Like feeble flashes in the welkin driven,
 When the far thunder seems as it were still!

“ But who can tell if that uncertain glare
 Be Phœbus’ self, adorned with glowing vest;
 Or, if illusions, pregnant in the air,
 Have drawn our glances to the radiant west?

“ Haply the sunset has deceived the sight —
 Perchance ’tis evening, while we look for morning;
 Bewildered in the mazes of twilight,
 That lucid sunset may *appear* a dawning!”
 G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

THE THREE GLORIOUS DAYS

(“ *Frères, vous avez vos journées.*”)

YOUTH of France, sons of the bold,
 Your oakleaf victor-wreaths behold!
 Our civic-laurels — honoured dead!
 So bright your triumphs in life’s morn,
 Your maiden-standards hacked and torn,
 On Austerlitz might lustre shed.

All that your fathers did re-done —
 A people’s rights all nobly won —
 Ye tore them living from the shroud!
 Three glorious days bright July’s gift,
 The Bastiles off our hearts ye lift!
 Oh! of such deeds be ever proud!

Of patriot sires ye lineage claim,
 Their souls shone in your eye of flame;

Commencing the great work was theirs;
On you the task to finish laid
Your fruitful mother, France, who bade
Flow in one day a hundred years.

E'en chilly Albion admires,
The grand example Europe fires;
America shall clap her hands,
When swiftly o'er the Atlantic wave,
Fame sounds the news of how the brave,
In three bright days, have burst their bands!

With tyrant dead your fathers traced
A circle wide, with battles graced;
Victorious garland, red and vast!
Which blooming out from home did go
To Cadiz, Cairo, Rome, Moscow,
From Jemappes to Montmirail passed!

Of warlike Lyceums ye are
The favoured sons; there, deeds of war
Formed e'en your plays, while o'er you shook
The battle-flags in air aloft!
Passing your lines, Napoleon oft
Electrified you with a look!

Eagle of France! whose vivid wing
Did in a hundred places fling
A bloody feather, till one night
The arrow whelmed thee 'neath the wave!
Look up — rejoice — for now thy brave
And worthy eaglets dare the light.

ELIZABETH COLLINS.

TRIBUTE TO THE VANQUISHED

(" *Oh! laissez-moi pleurer sur cetta race.*")

OH! let me weep that race whose day is past,
 By exile given, by exile claimed once more,
 Thrice swept away upon that fatal blast.
 Whate'er its blame, escort we to our shore
 These relics of the monarchy of yore;
 And to th' outmarching oriflamme be paid
 War's honours by the flag on Fleurus' field displayed!
Frascr's Magazine.

THE ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS

(" . . . *Quand longtemps a grondé la bouche du Vésuve.*")

WHEN huge Vesuvius in its torment long,
 Threatening has growled its cavernous jaws among,
 When its hot lava like the bubbling wine,
 Foaming doth all its monstrous edge incarnadine,
 Then is alarm in Naples.

With dismay,
 Wanton and wild her weeping thousands pour,
 Convulsive grasp the ground, its rage to stay,
 Implore the angry Mount — in vain implore!
 For lo! a column tow'ring more and more,
 Of smoke and ashes from the burning crest
 Shoots like a vulture's neck reared from its airy nest.

Sudden a flash, and from th' enormous den
 Th' eruption's lurid mass bursts forth amain,
 Bounding in frantic ecstasy. Ah! then

Farewell to Grecian fount and Tuscan fame!
 Sails in the bay imbibe the purpling stain,
 The while the lava in profusion wide
 Flings o'er the mountain's neck its showery locks untied.

It comes — it comes! that lava deep and rich,
 That dower which fertilizes fields and fills
 New moles upon the waters, bay and beach.
 Broad sea and clustered isles, one terror thrills
 As roll the red inexorable rills;
 While Naples trembles in her palaces,
 More helpless than the leaves when tempests shake the trees.

Prodigious chaos, streets in ashes lost,
 Dwellings devoured and vomited again.
 Roof against neighbour-roof, bewildered, tossed.
 The waters boiling and the burning plain;
 While clang the giant steeples as they reel,
 Unprompted, their own tocsin peal.

Yet 'mid the wreck of cities, and the pride
 Of the green valleys and the isles laid low,
 The crash of walls, the tumult waste and wide,
 O'er sea and land; 'mid all this work of woe,
 Vesuvius still, though close its crater-glow,
 Forgetful spares — Heaven wills that it should spare,
 The lonely cell where kneels an aged priest in prayer.
Fraser's Magazine.

TO THE NAPOLEON COLUMN

(“*Oh! quand il bâtissait.*”)

WHEN with gigantic hand he placed,
 For throne on vassal Europe based,
 That column's lofty height —

Pillar, in whose dread majesty,
In double immortality,
Glory and bronze unite!

Aye, when he built it that, some day,
Discord or war their course might stay,
Or here might break their car;
And in our streets to put to shame
Pigmies that bear the hero's name
Of Greek and Roman war.

It was a glorious sight; the world
His hosts had trod, with flags unfurled,
In veteran array;
Kings fled before him, forced to yield,
He, conqueror on each battlefield,
Their cannon bore away.

Then, with his victors back he came;
All France with booty teemed, her name
Was writ on sculptured stone;
And Paris cried with joy, as when
The parent bird comes home again
To th' eaglets left alone.

Into the furnace flame, so fast,
Were heaps of war-won metal cast,
The future monument!
His thought had formed the giant mould,
And piles of brass in the fire he rolled,
From hostile cannon rent.

When to the battlefield he came,
He grasped the guns spite tongues of flame,
And bore the spoil away.
This bronze to France's Rome he brought,
And to the founder said, "Is aught
Wanting for our array?"

And when, beneath a radiant sun,
 That man, his noble purpose done,
 With calm and tranquil mien,
 Disclosed to view this glorious fane,
 And did with peaceful hand contain
 The warlike eagle's sheen.

Round *thee*, when hundred thousands placed,
 As some great Roman's triumph graced,
 The little Romans all;
 We boys hung on the procession's flanks,
 Seeking some father in thy ranks,
 And loud thy praise did call.

Who that survey'd thee, when that day
 Thou deem'd that future glory ray
 Would here be ever bright;
 Fear'd that, ere long, all France thy grave
 From pettifoggers vain would crave
 Beneath that column's height?
Author of "Critical Essays."

MARRIAGE AND FEASTS

(*"La salle est magnifique."*)

THE hall is gay with limpid lustre bright —
 The feast to pampered palate gives delight —
 The sated guests pick at the spicy food,
 And drink profusely, for the cheer is good;
 And at that table — where the wise are few —
 Both sexes and all ages meet the view;
 The sturdy warrior with a thoughtful face —
 The am'rous youth, the maid replete with grace.
 The prattling infant, and the hoary hair
 Of second childhood's proselytes — are there;—

And the most gaudy in that spacious hall,
 Are e'er the young, or oldest of them all!
 Helmet and banner, ornament and crest,
 The lion rampant, and the jewelled vest,
 The silver star that glitters fair and white,
 The arms that tell of many a nation's might —
 Heraldic blazonry, ancestral pride,
 And all mankind invents for pomp beside,
 The wingéd leopard, and the eagle wild —
 All these encircle woman, chief and child;
 Shine on the carpet burying their feet,
 Adorn the dishes that contain their meat;
 And hang upon the drapery, which around
 Falls from the lofty ceiling to the ground,
 Till on the floor its waving fringe is spread,
 As the bird's wing may sweep the roses' bed.—

Thus is the banquet ruled by Noise and Light,
 Since Light and Noise are foremost on the site.

The chamber echoes to the joy of them
 Who throng around, each with his diadem —
 Each seated on proud throne — but, lesson vain!
 Each sceptre holds its master with a chain!
 Thus hope of flight were futile from that hall,
 Where chiefest guest was most enslaved of all!
 The god-like-making draught that fires the soul
 The Love — sweet poison-honey — past control,
 (Formed of the sexual breath — an idle name,
 Offspring of Fancy and a nervous frame) —
 Pleasure, mad daughter of the darksome Night,
 Whose languid eye flames when is fading light —
 The gallant chases where a man is borne
 By stalwart charger, to the sounding horn —
 The sheeny silk, the bed of leaves of rose,
 Made more to soothe the sight than court repose;
 The mighty palaces that raise the sneer

Of jealous mendicants and wretches near —
 The spacious parks, from which horizon blue
 Arches o'er alabaster statues new;
 Where Superstition still her walk will take,
 Unto soft music stealing o'er the lake —
 The innocent modesty by gems undone —
 The qualms of judges by small brib'ry won —
 The dread of children, trembling while they play —
 The bliss of monarchs, potent in their sway —
 The note of war struck by the culverin,
 That snakes its brazen neck through battle din —
 The military millipede
 That tramples out the guilty seed —
 The capital all pleasure and delight —
 And all that like a town or army chokes
 The gazer with foul dust or sulphur smokes.
 The budget, prize for which ten thousand bait
 A subtle hook, that ever, as they wait
 Catches a weed, and drags them to their fate.
 While gleamingly its golden scales still spread —
 Such were the meats by which these guests were fed.
 A hundred slaves for lazy master cared,
 And served each one with what was e'er prepared
 By him, who in a sombre vault below,
 Peppered the royal pig with peoples' woe,
 And grimly glad went labouring till late —
 The morose alchemist we know as Fate!
 That ev'ry guest might learn to suit his taste,
 Behind had Conscience, real or mock'ry, placed;
 Conscience a guide who every evil spies,
 But royal nurses early pluck out both his eyes!

Oh! at the table there be all the great,
 Whose lives are bubbles that best joys inflate!
 Superb, magnificent of revels — doubt
 That sagest lose their heads in such a rout!
 In the long laughter, ceaseless roaming round,

Joy, mirth and glee give out a maelström's sound,
And the astonished gazer casts his care,
Where ev'ry eyeball glistens in the flare.

But oh! while yet the singing Hebes pour
Forgetfulness of those without the door —
At very hour when all are most in joy,
And the hid orchestra annuls annoy,
Woe — woe! with jollity a-top the heights,
With further tapers adding to the lights,
And gleaming 'tween the curtains on the street,
Where poor folks stare — hark to the heavy feet!
Some one smites roundly on the gilded grate,
Some one below will be admitted straight,
Some one, though not invited, who'll not wait!
Close not the door! Your orders are vain breath —
That stranger enters to be known as Death —
Or merely Exile — clothed in alien guise —
Death drags away — with *his* prey Exile flies!

Death is that sight. He promenades the hall,
And casts a gloomy shadow on them all,
'Neath which they bend like willows soft,
Ere seizing one — the dumbest monarch oft,
And bears him to eternal heat and drouth,
While still the toothsome morsel's in his mouth.

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

THE MORROW OF GRANDEUR

(“ *Non, l'avenir n'est à personne!* ”)

SIRE, beware, the future's range
Is of God alone the power,
Naught below but augurs change,
E'en with ev'ry passing hour.

Future! mighty mystery!
 All the earthly goods that be,
 Fortune, glory, war's renown,
 King or kaiser's sparkling crown,
 Victory! with her burning wings,
 Proud ambition's covetings,—

These may our grasp no more detain
 Than the free bird who doth alight
 Upon our roof, and takes its flight
 High into air again.

Nor smile, nor tear, nor haughtiest lord's command,
 Avails t' unclasp the cold and closéd hand.

Thy voice to disenthral,
 Dumb phantom, shadow ever at our side!
 Veiled spectre, journeying with us stride for stride
 Whom men "To-morrow" call.

Oh, to-morrow! who may dare
 Its realties to scan?
 God to-morrow brings to bear
 What to-day is sown by man.
 'Tis the lightning in its shroud,
 'Tis the star-concealing cloud,
 Traitor, tis his purpose showing,
 Engine, lofty tow'rs o'erthrowing,
 Wand'ring star, its region changing,
 "Lady of kingdoms," ever ranging.
 To-morrow! 'Tis the rude display
 Of the throne's framework, blank and cold,
 That, rich with velvet, bright with gold,
 Dazzles the eye to-day.

To-morrow! 'tis the foaming war-horse falling;
 To-morrow! thy victorious march appalling,
 'Tis the red fires from Moscow's tow'rs that wave;
 'Tis thine Old Guard strewing the Belgian plain;

'Tis the lone island in th' Atlantic main
To-morrow! 'tis the grave!

Into capitals subdued
Thou mayst ride with gallant rein,
Cut the knots of civil feud
With the trenchant steel in twain;
With thine edicts barricade
Haughty Thames' o'er-freighted trade;
Fickle Victory's self enthrall,
Captive to thy trumpet call;
Burst the stoutest gates asunder;
Leave the names of brightest wonder,
Pale and dim, behind thee far;
And to exhaustless armies yield
Thy glancing spur,—o'er Europe's field
A glory-guiding star.

God guards duration, if lends space to thee,
Thou mayst o'er-range mundane immensity,
Rise high as human head can rise sublime,
Snatch Europe from the stamp of Charlemagne,
Asia from Mahomet; but never gain
Power o'er the Morrow from the Lord of Time!
Fraser's Magazine.

THE EAGLET MOURNED

(*"Encor si ce banni n'eût rien aimé sur terre."*)

Too hard Napoleon's fate! if, lone,
No being he had loved, no single one,
Less dark that doom had been.
But with the heart of might doth ever dwell
The heart of love! and in his island cell
Two things there were — I ween.

Two things — a portrait and a map there were —
 Here hung the pictured world, an infant there:
 That framed his genius, this enshrined his love.
 And as at eve he glanced round th' alcove,
 Where gaolers watched his very thoughts to spy,
 What mused he *then* — what dream of years gone-by
 Stirred 'neath that discrowned brow, and fired that glisten-
 ing eye?

'Twas not the steps of that heroic tale
 That from Arcola marched to Montmirail
 On Glory's red degrees;
 Nor Cairo-pashas' steel-devouring steeds,
 Nor the tall shadows of the Pyramids —
 Ah! 'twas not always these;

'Twas not the bursting shell, the iron sleet,
 The whirlwind rush of battle 'neath his feet,
 Through twice ten years ago,
 When at his beck, upon that sea of steel
 Were launched the rustling banners — there to reel
 Like masts when tempests blow.

'Twas not Madrid, nor Kremlin of the Czar,
 Nor Pharos on Old Egypt's coast afar
 Nor shrill *réveillé's* camp-awakening sound,
 Nor bivouac couch'd its starry fires around,
 Crested dragoons, grim, veteran grenadiers,
 Nor the red lancers 'mid their wood of spears
 Blazing like baleful poppies 'mong the golden ears.

No — 'twas an infant's image, fresh and fair,
 With rosy mouth half oped, as slumbering there.
 It lay beneath the smile
 Of her whose breast, soft-bending o'er its sleep,
 Lingering upon that little lip doth keep
 One pendent drop the while.

Then, his sad head upon his hands inclined,
 He wept; that father-heart all unconfin'd,
 Outpoured in love alone.
 My blessing on thy clay-cold head, poor child.
 Sole being for whose sake his thoughts, beguiled,
 Forgot the world's lost throne.

Fraser's Magazine.

INVOCATION

SAY, Lord! for Thou alone canst tell
 Where lurks the good invisible
 Amidst the depths of discord's sea —
 That seem, alas! so dark to me!
 Oppressive to a mighty state,
 Contentions, feuds, the people's hate —
 But who dare question that which fate
 Has ordered to have been?
 Haply the earthquake may unfold
 The resting-place of purest gold,
 And haply surges up have rolled
 The pearls that were unseen!

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

OUTSIDE THE BALL-ROOM

(*"Ainsi l'Hôtel de Ville illumine."*)

BEHOLD the ball-room flashing on the sight,
 From step to cornice one grand glare of light;
 The noise of mirth and revelry resounds,
 Like fairy melody on haunted grounds.
 But who demands this profuse, wanton glee,
 These shouts prolonged and wild festivity —
 Not sure our city — web, more woe than bliss,
 In any hour, requiring aught but this!

Deaf is the ear of all that jewelled crowd
To sorrow's sob, although its call be loud.
Better than waste long nights in idle show,
To help the indigent and raise the low —
To train the wicked to forsake his way,
And find th' industrious work from day to day!
Better to charity those hours afford,
Which now are wasted at the festal board;

And ye, O high-born beauties! in whose soul
Virtue resides, and Vice has no control;
Ye whom prosperity forbids to sin,
So fair without — so chaste, so pure within —
Whose honour Want ne'er threatened to betray,
Whose eyes are joyous, and whose heart is gay;
Around whose modesty a hundred arms,
Aided by pride, protect a thousand charms;
For you this ball is pregnant with delight;
As glitt'ring planets cheer the gloomy night:—
But, O, ye wist not, while your souls are glad,
How millions wander, homeless, sick and sad!
Hazard has placed you in a happy sphere,
And like your own to you all lots appear;
For blinded by the sun of bliss your eyes
Can see no dark horizon to the skies.

Such is the chance of life! Each gallant thane,
Prince, peer, and noble, follow in your train;—
They praise your loveliness, and in your ear
They whisper pleasing things, but insincere;
Thus, as the moths enamoured of the light,
Ye seek these realms of revelry each night.
But as ye travel thither, did ye know
What wretches walk the streets through which you go.
Sisters, whose gewgaws glitter in the glare
Of your great lustre, all expectant there,
Watching the passing crowd with avid eye,

Till one their love, or lust, or shame may buy;
Or, with commingling jealousy and rage,
They mark the progress of your equipage;
And their deceitful life essays the while
To mask their woe beneath a sickly smile!

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

PRAYER FOR FRANCE

(*"O Dieu, si vous avez la France."*)

O God! if France be still thy guardian care,
Oh! spare these mercenary combats, spare!
The thrones that now are reared but to be broke;
The rights we render, and anon revoke;
The muddy stream of laws, ideas, needs,
Flooding our social life as it proceeds;
Opposing tribunes, even when seeming one —
Soft, yielding plaster put in place of stone;
Wave chasing wave in endless ebb and flow;
War, darker still and deeper in its woe;
One party fall'n, successor scarce preludes,
Than, straight, new views their furious feuds;
The great man's pressure on the poor for gold,
Rumours uncertain, conflicts, crimes untold;
Dark systems hatched in secret and in fear,
Telling of hate and strife to every ear,
That even to midnight sleep no peace is given,
For murd'rous cannon through our streets are driven.

J. S. MACRAE.

TO CANARIS, THE GREEK PATRIOT

(*"Canaris! nous t'avons oublié."*)

O CANARIS! O Canaris! the poet's song
 Has blameful left untold thy deeds too long!
 But when the tragic actor's part is done,
 When clamour ceases, and the fights are won,
 When heroes realize what Fate decreed,
 When chieftains mark no more which thousands bleed;
 When they have shone, as clouded or as bright,
 As fitful meteor in the heaven at night,
 And when the sycophant no more proclaims
 To gaping crowds the glory of their names,—
 'Tis then the mem'ries of warriors die,
 And fall — alas! — into obscurity,
 Until the poet, in whose verse alone
 Exists a world — can make their actions known,
 And in eternal epic measures, show
 They are not yet forgotten here below.
 And yet by us neglected! glory gloomed,
 Thy name seems sealed apart, entombed,
 Although our shouts to pigmies rise — no cries
 To mark thy presence echo to the skies;
 Farewell to Grecian heroes — silent is the lute,
 And sets your sun without one Memnon bruit?

There was a time men gave no peace
 To cheers for Athens, Bozzaris, Leonidas, and Greece!
 And Canaris' more-worshipped name was found
 On ev'ry lip, in ev'ry heart around.
 But now is changed the scene! On hist'ry's page
 Are writ o'er thine deeds of another age,
 And thine are not remembered.— Greece, farewell!

The world no more thine heroes' deeds will tell.
 Not that this matters to a man like thee!
 To whom is left the dark blue open sea,
 Thy gallant bark, that o'er the water flies,
 And the bright planet guiding in clear skies,
 All these remain, with accident and strife,
 Hope, and the pleasures of a roving life,
 Boon Nature's fairest prospects — land and main —
 The noisy starting, glad return again;
 The pride of freeman on a bounding deck,
 Which mocks at dangers and despises wreck,
 And e'en if lightning-pinions cleave the sea,
 'Tis all replete with joyousness to thee!

Yes, these remain! blue sky and ocean blue,
 Thine eagles with one sweep beyond the view —
 The sun in golden beauty ever pure,
 The distance where rich warmth doth aye endure —
 Thy language so mellifluously bland,
 Mixed with sweet idioms from Italia's strand,
 As Baya's streams to Samos' waters glide
 And with them mingle in one placid tide.

Yes, these remain, and Canaris! thy arms —
 The sculptured sabre, faithful in alarms —
 The brodered garb, the yataghan, the vest
 Expressive of thy rank, to thee still rest!
 And when thy vessel o'er the foaming sound
 Is proud past storied coasts to blithely bound,
 At once the point of beauty may restore
 Smiles to thy lip, and smoothe thy brow once more.
 G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

POLAND

(*"Seule au pied de la tour."*)

ALONE, beneath the tower whence thunder forth
 The mandates of the Tyrant of the North,
 Poland's sad genius kneels, absorbed in tears,
 Bound, vanquished, pallid with her fears —
 Alas! the crucifix is all that's left
 To her, of freedom and her sons bereft;
 And on her royal robe foul marks are seen
 Where Russian hectors' scornful feet have been.
 Anon she hears the clank of murd'rous arms,—
 The swordsmen come once more to spread alarms!
 And while she weeps against the prison walls,
 And waves her bleeding arm until it falls,
 To France she hopeless turns her glazing eyes,
 And sues her sister's succour ere she dies.

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

INSULT NOT THE FALLEN

(*"Oh! n'insultez jamais une femme qui tombe."*)

I TELL you, hush! no word of sneering scorn —
 True, fallen; but God knows how deep her sorrow.
 Poor girl! too many like her only born
 To love one day — to sin — and die the morrow.
 What know you of her struggles or her grief?
 Or what wild storms of want and woe and pain
 Tore down her soul from honour? As a leaf
 From autumn branches, or a drop of rain
 That hung in frailest splendour from a bough —
 Bright, glistening in the sunlight of God's day —

So had she clung to virtue once. But now —
 See Heaven's clear pearl polluted with earth's clay!
 The sin is yours — with your accursed gold —
 Man's wealth is master — woman's soul the slave!
 Some purest water still the mire may hold.
 Is there no hope for her — no power to save?
 Yea, once again to draw up from the clay
 The fallen rain-drop, till it shine above,
 Or save a fallen soul, needs but one ray
 Of Heaven's sunshine, or of human love.

W. C. K. WILDE.

ABOVE THE BATTLE

(“ *Le grand homme vaincu!* ”)

IN a brief moment can the hero fall
 From out his pride of place high-throned o'er all
 Earth's petty kings that shiver,
 Of all his glory and might discrown'd, ay, even
 Of that bright spell which seemed a dower of heaven;
 But his high heart keeps ever!

Thus, when the blast of battle doth enfold
 A banner bright, its azure, scarlet, gold,
 Adorned with glorious vallance,
 About th' ensanguined field lies scatterèd,
 Torn fiercely asunder shred by glittering shred,
 As by a vulture's talons.

What matter! O'er the ghastly strife that streams
 Hither and thither, wild with fire, smoke, screams,
 Of aspect calm and regal,
 High on the staff — last sight of warriors dying —
 Whence late the last proud purple rags were flying,
 Still stands the brazen eagle!

N. R. T.

MORNING

(“ *L’aurore s’allume.*”)

MORNING glances hither,
Now the shade is past;
Dream and fog fly thither
Where Night goes at last;
Open eyes and roses
As the darkness closes;
And the sound that grows is
Nature waking fast.

Murmuring all and singing,
Hark! the news is stirred,
Roof and creepers clinging,
Smoke and nest of bird;
Winds to oak-trees bear it,
Streams and fountains hear it,
Every breath and spirit
As a voice is heard.

All takes up its story,
Child resumes his play,
Hearth its ruddy glory,
Lute its lifted lay.
Wild or out of senses,
Through the world immense is
Sound as each commences
Schemes of yesterday.

W. M. HARDINGE.

SONG OF LOVE

(*"S'il est un charmant gazon."*)

IF there be a velvet sward
 By dewdrops pearly drest,
 Where through all seasons fairies guard
 Flowers by bees carest,
 Where one may gather, day and night,
 Roses, honeysuckle, lily white,
 I fain would make of it a site
 For thy foot to rest.

If there be a loving heart
 Where Honour rules the breast,
 Loyal and true in every part,
 That changes ne'er molest,
 Eager to run its noble race,
 Intent to do some work of grace,
 I fain would make of it a place
 For thy brow to rest.

And if there be of love a dream
 Rose-scented as the west,
 Which shows, each time it comes, a gleam,—
 A something sweet and blest,—
 A dream of which heaven is the pole,
 A dream that mingles soul and soul,
 I fain of it would make the goal
 Where thy mind should rest.

TORU DUTT.

SWEET CHARMER ¹

(“ *L'aube naît et ta porte est close.*”)

THOUGH heaven's gate of light uncloses,
 Thou stirr'st not — thou'rt laid to rest,
 Waking are thy sister roses,
 One only dreameth on thy breast.
 Hear me, sweet dreamer!
 Tell me all thy fears,
 Trembling in song,
 But to break in tears.

Lo! to greet thee, spirits pressing,
 Soft music brings the gentle dove,
 And fair light falleth like a blessing,
 While my poor heart can bring thee only love.
 Worship thee, angels love thee, sweet woman?
 Yes; for that love perfects my soul.
 None the less of heaven that my heart is human,
 Blent in one exquisite, harmonious whole.
H. B. FARNIE.

MORE STRONG THAN TIME.

(“ *Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre à ta coupe.*”)

SINCE I have set my lips to your full cup, my sweet,
 Since I my pallid face between your hands have laid,
 Since I have known your soul, and all the bloom of it,
 And all the perfume rare, now buried in the shade;

¹ Set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Since it was given to me to hear one happy while,
 The words wherein your heart spoke all its mysteries,
 Since I have seen you weep, and since I have seen you smile,
 Your lips upon my lips, and your gaze upon my eyes;

Since I have known upon my forehead glance and gleam,
 A ray, a single ray, of your star, veiled always,
 Since I have felt the fall upon my lifetime's stream
 Of one rose-petal plucked from the roses of your days;

I now am bold to say to the swift-changing hours,
 Pass — pass upon your way, for I grow never old.
 Flee to the dark abysm with all your fading flowers,
 One rose that none may pluck, within my heart I hold.

Your flying wings may smite, but they can never spill
 The cup fulfilled of love, from which my lips are wet.
 My heart has far more fire than you have frost to chill,
 My soul more love than you can make my soul forget.
 ANDREW LANG.

FLOWER AND BUTTERFLY:

(“*La pauvre fleur disait.*”)

THE humble flower bespake the heavenly butterfly:

“Flee no more!

See how our fates are diverse. Fixed to earth am I,
 Thou canst soar!

“Yet the same breath of love is ours; from men afar
 Both are fain
 To dwell; so like we be, 'tis soothly said we are
 Flowerets twain.

“But ah! the air uplifts thee, while the earth still doth
 hold me:
 Fortune's spite!

With fragrant breath I long to embalm thee and enfold
thee
In heaven-flight.

“In vain,—too far thou flitt’st! Through garden and
through meadow,
Fair and fleet;
Whilst I all lonely bide, and watch my circling shadow
At my feet.

“Thou fliest; then return’st; again afar art borne,
Void of fears;
And alway find’st thou me, ’neath every roseate morn,
Bathed in tears.

“Oh! that our love may prove the same sweets summer
brings,
Fair king mine,
Even like thy slave take root, or bless me with bright wings
Like to thine!”

ENVOY, TO

Roses and Butterflies, the grave must reunite us,
Soon or late.
Wherefore await it, say? Wilt not we now unite us,
Fate with fate?

Haply within the air, if from such place thy pleasure
Take blithe birth:
I’ the meads, if, like a flower, thou shed thy beauteous
treasure
On the earth.

E’en where thou wilt! What skills it? Be thou colour
bright,
Fragrance sweet;

LES CHANTS DU CREPUSCULE 113

Resplendent butterfly, or flower too fond for flight;
Bloom,— wing fleet!

To live with one another! such the sole good worth
One least sigh;
With *that*, let chance allot what home it will — dark earth,
Or blue sky!

N. R. T.

A SIMILE

(“ *Soyez comme l’oiseau.*”)

THOU art like the bird
That alights and sings
Though the frail spray bends —
For he knows he has wings.
FANNY KEMBLE (BUTLER).

THE POET TO HIS WIFE.

(“ *Oh! qui que vous soyez.*”)

WHOE’ER you be, send blessings to her — she
Was sister of my soul immortal, free!
My pride, my hope, my shelter, my resource,
When green hoped not to grey to run its course;
She was enthronéd Virtue under heaven’s dome,
My idol in the shrine of curtained home.

LES VOIX INTERIEURES.—1837

THE BLINDED BOURBONS

(“ *Qui leur eût dit l’austère destinée?* ”)

WHO then, to them¹ had told the Future’s story?
Or said that France, low bowed before their glory
One day would mindful be
Of them and of their mournful fate no more,
Than of the wrecks its waters have swept o’er
The unremembering sea?

That their old Tuileries should see the fall
Of blazons from its high heraldic hall,
Dismantled, crumbling, prone;²
Or that, o’er yon dark Louvre’s architrave³
A Corsican, as yet unborn, should grave
An eagle, then unknown?

That gay St. Cloud another lord awaited,
Or that in scenes Le Nôtre’s art created
For princely sport and ease,
Crimean steeds, trampling the velvet glade,
Should browse the bark beneath the stately shade
Of the great Louis’ trees?

Fraser’s Magazine.

¹ The young princes, afterwards Louis XVIII. and Charles X.

² The Tuileries, several times stormed by mobs, was so irreparably injured by the Communists that, in 1882, the Paris Town Council decided that the ruins should be cleared away.

³ After the Eagle and the Bee superseded the Lily-flowers, the Third Napoleon’s initial “N” flourished for two decades, but has been excised or plastered over, the words “National Property” or “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” being cut in the stone profusely.

CHARITY.

(*"Je suis la Charité."*)

"Lo! I am Charity," she cries,

 "Who waketh up before the day;
While yet asleep all nature lies,
 God bids me rise and go my way."

 How fair her glorious features shine,
 Whereon the hand of God hath set
An angel's attributes divine,
 With all a woman's sweetness met.

Above the old man's couch of woe
 She bows her forehead, pure and even.
There's nothing fairer here below,
 There's nothing grander up in heaven,

Than when caressingly she stands
 (The cold hearts wakening 'gain their beat),
And holds within her holy hands
 The little children's naked feet.

To every den of want and toil
 She goes, and leaves the poorest fed;
Leaves wine and bread, and genial oil,
 And hopes that blossom in her tread,

And fire, too, beautiful bright fire,
 That mocks the glowing dawn begun,
Where, having set the blind old sire,
 He dreams he's sitting in the sun.

Then, over all the earth she runs,
 And seeks, in the cold mists of life,
Those poor forsaken little ones
 Who droop and weary in the strife.

Ah, most her heart is stirred for them,
Whose foreheads, wrapped in mists obscure,
Still wear a triple diadem —

The young, the innocent, the poor.

And they are better far than we,
And she bestows a worthier meed;
For, with the loaf of charity,
She gives the kiss that children need.

She gives, and while they wondering eat
The tear-steeped bread by love supplied,
She stretches round them in the street
Her arm that passers push aside.

If, with raised head and step alert,
She sees the rich man stalking by,
She touches his embroidered skirt,
And gently shows them where they lie.

She begs for them of careless crowd
Of earnest brows and narrow hearts,
That when it hears her cry aloud,
Turns like the ebb-tide and departs.

O miserable he who sings
Some strain impure, whose numbers fall
Along the cruel wind that brings
Death to some child beneath his wall.

O strange and sad and fatal thing,
When, in the rich man's gorgeous hall,
The huge fire on the hearth doth fling
A light on some great festival,

To see the drunkard smile in state,
In purple wrapt, with myrtle crowned,
While Jesus lieth at the gate
With only rags to wrap him round.

Dublin University Magazine.

TO ALBERT DURER.

(" Dans les vieilles forêts.")

THROUGH ancient forests — where like flowing tide
The rising sap shoots vigour far and wide,
Mounting the column of the alder dark
And silv'ring o'er the birch's shining bark —
Hast thou not often, Albert Dürer, strayed
Pond'ring awe-stricken — through the half-lit glade,
Pallid and trembling — glancing not behind
From mystic fear that did thy senses bind,
Yet made thee hasten with unsteady pace?
Oh, Master grave! whose musings lone we trace
Throughout thy works we look on reverently.
Amidst the gloomy umbrage thy mind's eye
Saw clearly, 'mong the shadows soft yet deep,
The web-toed faun, and Pan the green-eyed peep,
Who decked with flowers the cave where thou might'st rest.
Leaf-laden dryads, too, in verdure drest.
A strange weird world such forest was to thee,
Where mingled truth and dreams in mystery;
There leaned old ruminating pines, and there
The giant elms, whose boughs deformed and bare
A hundred rough and crooked elbows made;
And in this sombre group the wind had swayed,
Nor life — nor death — but life in death seemed found.
The cresses drink — the water flows — and round
Upon the slopes the mountain rowans meet,
And 'neath the brushwood plant their gnarled feet,
Intwining slowly where the creepers twine.
There, too, the lakes as mirrors brightly shine,
And show the swan-necked flowers, each line by line.
Chimeras roused take stranger shapes for thee,

The glittering scales of mailed throat we see,
 And claws tight pressed on huge old knotted tree;
 While from a cavern dim the bright eyes glare.
 Oh, vegetation! Spirit! Do we dare
 Question of matter, and of forces found
 'Neath a rude skin — in living verdure bound.
 Oh, Master — I, like thee, have wandered oft
 Where mighty trees made arches high aloft,
 But ever with a consciousness of strife,
 A surging struggle of the inner life.
 Ever the trembling of the grass I say,
 And the boughs rocking as the breezes play,
 Have stirred deep thoughts in a bewild'ring way.
 Oh, God! alone Great Witness of all deeds,
 Of thoughts and acts, and all our human needs,
 God only knows how often in such scenes
 Of savage beauty under leafy screens,
 I've felt the mighty oaks had spirit dower —
 Like me knew mirth and sorrow — sentient power,
 And whisp'ring each to each in twilight dim,
 Had hearts that beat — and owned a soul from Him!

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

TO HIS MUSE.

(“*Puisqu'ici-bas tout âme.*”)

SINCE everything below
 Doth, in this mortal state,
 Its tone, its fragrance, or its glow
 Communicate;

Since all that lives and moves
 Upon the earth, bestows
 On what it seeks and what it loves
 Its thorn or rose;

Since April to the trees
Gives a bewitching sound,
'And sombre night to grief gives ease,
And peace profound;

Since day-spring on the flower
A fresh'ning drop confers,
'And the fresh air on branch and bower
Its choristers;

Since the dark wave bestows
A soft caress, imprest
On the green bank to which it goes
Seeking its rest;

I give thee at this hour,
Thus fondly bent o'er thee,
The best of all the things in dow'r
That in me be.

Receive,— poor gift, 'tis true,
Which grief, not joy, endears,—
My thoughts, that like a shower of dew,
Reach thee in tears.

My vows untold receive,
All pure before thee laid;
Receive of all the days I live
The light or shade!

My hours with rapture fill'd,
Which no suspicion wrongs;
'And all the blandishments distill'd
From all my songs.

My spirit, whose essay
Flies fearless, wild, and free,
'And hath, and seeks, to guide its way
No star but thee.

No pensive, dreamy Muse,
 Who, though all else should smile,
 Oft as thou weep'st, with thee would choose,
 To weep the while.

Oh, sweetest mine! this gift
 Receive; —'tis thine alone; —
 My heart, of which there's nothing left
 When Love is gone!

Fraser's Magazine.

THE COW

(*"Devant la blanche ferme."*)

BEFORE the farm where, o'er the porch, festoon
 Wild creepers red, and gaffer sits at noon,
 Whilst strutting fowl display their varied crests,
 And the old watchdog slumberously rests,
 They half-attentive to the clarion of their king,
 Resplendent in the sunshine op'ning wing —
 There stood a cow, with neck-bell jingling light,
 Superb, enormous, dappled red and white —
 Soft, gentle, patient as a hind unto its young,
 Letting the children swarm until they hung
 Around her, under — rustics with their teeth
 Whiter than marble their ripe lips beneath,
 And bushy hair fresh and more brown
 Than mossy walls at old gates of a town,
 Calling to one another with loud cries
 For younger imps to be in at the prize;
 Stealing without concern but tremulous with fear
 They glance around lest Doll the maid appear; —
 Their jolly lips — that haply cause some pain,
 And all those busy fingers, pressing now and 'gain,
 The teeming udders whose small, thousand pores

Gush out the nectar 'mid their laughing roars,
While she, good mother, gives and gives in heaps,
And never moves. Anon there creeps
A vague soft shiver o'er the hide unmarred,
As sharp they pull, she seems of stone most hard.
Dreamy of large eye, seeks she no release,
And shrinks not while there's one still to appease.

Thus Nature — refuge 'gainst the slings of fate!
Mother of all, indulgent as she's great!
Lets us, the hungered of each age and rank,
Shadow and milk seek in the eternal flank;
Mystic and carnal, foolish, wise, repair,
The souls retiring and those that dare,
Sages with halos, poets laurel-crowned,
All creep beneath or cluster close around,
And with unending greed and joyous cries,
From sources full, draw need's supplies,
Quench hearty thirst, obtain what must eftsoon
Form blood and mind, in freest boon,
Respire at length thy sacred flaming light,
From all that greets our ears, touch, scent or sight —
Brown leaves, blue mountains, yellow gleams, green sod —
Thou undistracted still dost dream of God.

TORU DUTT.

MOTHERS

(“*Regardez: les enfants.*”)

SEE all the children gathered there,
Their mother near; so young, so fair,
An elder sister she might be,
And yet she hears, amid their games,
The shaking of their unknown names
In the dark urn of destiny.

She wakes their smiles, she soothes their cares,
 On that pure heart so like to theirs,
 Her spirit with such life is rife
 That in its golden rays we see,
 Touched into graceful poesy,
 The dull cold commonplace of life.

Still following, watching, whether burn
 The Christmas log in winter stern,
 While merry plays go round;
 Or streamlets laugh to breeze of May
 That shakes the leaf to break away —
 A shadow falling to the ground.

If some poor man with hungry eyes
 Her baby's coral bauble spies,
 She marks his look with famine wild,
 For Christ's dear sake she makes with joy
 An alms-gift of the silver toy —
 A smiling angel of the child.

Dublin University Magazine.

TO SOME BIRDS FLOWN AWAY

(*"Enfants! Oh! revenez!"*)

CHILDREN, come back — come back, I say —
 You whom my folly chased away
 A moment since, from this my room,
 With bristling wrath and words of doom!
 What had you done, you bandits small,
 With lips as red as roses all? —
 What crime? — what wild and hapless deed?
 What porcelain vase by you was split
 To thousand pieces? Did you need
 For pastime, as you handled it,

Some Gothic missal to enrich
With your designs fantastical?
Or did your tearing fingers fall
On some old picture? Which, oh, which
Your dreadful fault? Not one of these;
Only when left yourselves to please
This morning but a moment here
'Mid papers tinted by my mind,
You took some embryo verses near —
Half formed, but fully well designed
To open out. Your heart's desire
Was but to throw them on the fire,
Then watch the tinder, for the sight
Of shining sparks that twinkle bright
As little boats that sail at night,
Or like the window lights that spring
From out the dark at evening.

'Twas all, and you were well content.
Fine loss was this for anger's vent —
A strophe ill made midst your play,
Sweet sound that chased the words away
In stormy flight. An ode quite new,
With rhymes inflated — stanzas, too,
That panted, moving lazily,
And heavy Alexandrine lines
That seemed to jostle bodily,
Like children full of play designs
That spring at once from schoolroom's form.
Instead of all this angry storm,
Another might have thanked you well
For saving prey from that grim cell,
That hollowed den 'neath journals great,
Where editors who poets flout
With their demoniac laughter shout.
And I have scolded you! What fate
For charming dwarfs who never meant

To anger Hercules! And I
Have frightened you! — My chair I sent
Back to the wall, and then let fly
A shower of words the envious use —
“Get out,” I said, with hard abuse,
“Leave me alone — alone I say.”
Poor man alone! Ah, well-a-day,
What fine result — what triumph rare!
As one turns from the coffin’d dead
So left you me: — I could but stare
Upon the door through which you fled —
I proud and grave — but punished quite.
And what care you for this my plight! —
You have recovered liberty,
Fresh air and lovely scenery,
The spacious park and wished-for grass;
The running stream, where you can throw
A blade to watch what comes to pass;
Blue sky, and all the spring can show;
Nature, serenely fair to see;
The book of birds and spirits free,
God’s poem, worth much more than mine,
Where flowers for perfect stanzas shine —
Flowers that a child may pluck in play,
No harsh voice frightening it away.
And I’m alone — all pleasure o’er —
Alone with pedant called “Ennui,”
For since the morning at my door
Ennui has waited patiently.
That doctor — London born, you mark,
One Sunday in December dark,
Poor little ones — he loved you not,
And waited till the chance he got
To enter as you passed away,
And in the very corner where
You played with frolic laughter gay,
He sighs and yawns with weary air.

What can I do? Shall I read books,
Or write more verse — or turn fond looks
Upon enamels blue, sea green,
And white — on insects rare as seen
Upon my Dresden china ware?
Or shall I touch the globe, and care
To make the heavens turn upon
Its axis? No, not one — not one
Of all these things care I to do;
All wearies me — I think of you.
In truth with you my sunshine fled,
And gaiety with your light tread —
Glad noise that set me dreaming still.
'Twas my delight to watch your will,
And mark you point with finger tips
To help your spelling out a word;
To see the pearls between your lips
When I your joyous laughter heard;
Your honest brows that looked so true,
And said "Oh, yes!" to each intent;
Your great bright eyes, that loved to view
With admiration innocent
My fine old Sèvres; the eager thought
That every kind of knowledge sought;
The elbow push with "Come and see!"

Oh, certes! spirits, sylphs, there be,
And fays the wind blows often here;
The gnomes that squat the ceiling near,
In corners made by old books dim;
The long-backed dwarfs, those goblins grim
That seem at home 'mong vases rare,
And chat to them with friendly air —
Oh, how the joyous demon throng
Must all have laughed with laughter long
To see you on my rough drafts fall,
My bald hexameters, and all

The mournful, miserable band,
And drag them with relentless hand
From out their box, with true delight
To set them each and all a-light,
And then with clapping hands to lean
Above the stove and watch the scene,
How to the mass deformed there came
A soul that showed itself in flame!

Bright tricky children — oh, I pray
Come back and sing and dance away,
And chatter too — sometimes you may,
A giddy group, a big book seize —
Or sometimes, if it so you please,
With nimble step you'll run to me
And push the arm that holds the pen,
Till on my finished verse will be

A stroke that's like a steeple when
Seen suddenly upon a plain.
My soul longs for your breath again
To warm it. Oh, return — come here
With laugh and babble — and no fear
When with your shadow you obscure
The book I read, for I am sure,
Oh, madcaps terrible and dear,
That you were right and I was wrong.
But who has ne'er with scolding tongue
Blamed out of season. Pardon me!
You must forgive — for sad are we.
The young should not be hard and cold
And unforgiving to the old.
Children each morn your souls ope out
Like windows to the shining day.

Oh, miracle that comes about,
The miracle that children gay
Have happiness and goodness too,

Caressed by destiny are you,
Charming you are, if you but play.
But we with living overwrought,
And full of grave and sombre thought,
Are snappish oft: dear little men,
We have ill tempered days, and then,
Are quite unjust and full of care;
It rained this morning and the air
Was chill; but clouds that dimm'd the sky
Have passed. Things spited me, and why?
But now my heart repents. Behold
What 'twas that made me cross, and scold!
All by-and-by you'll understand,
When brows are mark'd by Time's stern hand;
Then you will comprehend, be sure,
When older — that's to say, less pure.

The fault I freely own was mine.
But oh, for pardon now I pine!
Enough my punishment to meet,
You must forgive, I do entreat
With clasped hands praying — oh, come back,
Make peace, and you shall nothing lack.
See now my pencils — paper — here,
And pointless compasses, and dear
Old lacquer-work; and stoneware clear
Through glass protecting; all man's toys
So coveted by girls and boys.
Great China monsters — bodies much
Like cucumbers — you all shall touch.
I yield up all! my picture rare
Found beneath antique rubbish heap,
My great and tapestried oak chair
I will from you no longer keep.
You shall about my table climb,
And dance, or drag, without a cry
From me as if it were a crime.

Even I'll look on patiently
If you your jagged toys all throw
Upon my carved bench, till it show
The wood is torn; and freely too,
I'll leave in your own hands to view,
My pictured Bible — oft desired —
But which to touch your fear inspired —
With God in emperor's robes attired.

Then if to see my verses burn,
Should seem to you a pleasant turn,
Take them to freely tear away
Or burn. But, oh! not so I'd say,
If this were Méry's room to-day.
That noble poet! Happy town,
Marseilles the Greek, that him doth own!
Daughter of Homer, fair to see,
Of Virgil's son the mother she.
To you I'd say, Hold, children all,
Let but your eyes on his work fall;
These papers are the sacred nest
In which his crooning fancies rest;
To-morrow winged to Heaven they'll soar.

For new-born verse imprisoned still
In manuscript may suffer sore
At your small hands and childish will.
Without a thought of bad intent,
Of cruelty quite innocent.
You wound their feet, and bruise their wings,
And make them suffer those ill things
That children's play to young birds bring.

But mine! no matter what you do,
My poetry is all in you;
You are my inspiration bright
That gives my verse its purest light.
Children whose life is made of hope,

Whose joy, within its mystic scope,
Owes all to ignorance of ill,
You have not suffered, and you still
Know not what gloomy thoughts weigh down
The poet-writer weary grown.
What warmth is shed by your sweet smile!
How much he needs to gaze awhile
Upon your shining placid brow,
When his own brow its ache doth know;
With what delight he loves to hear
Your frolic play 'neath tree that's near,
Your joyous voices mixing well
With his own song's all-mournful swell!
Come back then, children! come to me,
If you wish not that I should be
As lonely now that you're afar
As fisherman of Etrétat,
Who listless on his elbow leans
Through all the weary winter scenes,
As tired of thought — as on Time flies —
And watching only rainy skies!

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

MY THOUGHTS OF YE

(“ *A quoi je songe?* ”)

WHAT do I dream of? Far from the low roof,
Where now ye are, children, I dream of you;
Of your young heads that are the hope and crown
Of my full summer, ripening to its fall.
Branches whose shadow grows along my wall,
Sweet souls scarce open to the breath of day,
Still dazzled with the brightness of your dawn.
I dream of those two little ones at play,
Making the threshold vocal with their cries,

Half tears, half laughter, mingled sport and strife,
Like two flowers knocked together by the wind.
Or of the elder two — more anxious thought —
Breasting already broader waves of life,
A conscious innocence on either face,
My pensive daughter and my curious boy.
Thus do I dream, while the light sailors sing,
At even moored beneath some steepy shore,
While the waves opening all their nostrils breathe
A thousand sea-scents to the wandering wind,
And the whole air is full of wondrous sounds,
From sea to strand, from land to sea, given back —
Alone and sad, thus do I dream of you.
Children, and house and home, the table set,
The glowing hearth, and all the pious care
Of tender mother, and of grandsire kind;
And while before me, spotted with white sails,
The limpid ocean mirrors all the stars,
And while the pilot, from the infinite main,
Looks with calm eye into the infinite heaven,
I dreaming of you only, seek to scan
And fathom all my soul's deep love for you —
Love sweet, and powerful, and everlasting —
And find that the great sea is small beside it.

Dublin University Magazine.

THE BEACON IN THE STORM

(“ *Quels sont ces bruits sourds?* ”)

HARK, what sombre tones!
From far billows dying,
Listen, hollow sighing,
Blent with heavy moans,
Blent with eerie crying,—

Till a shriller wail
Bodes new agony . . .—
Through his horn the gale
Thunders o'er the sea!

Rain in torrents, hark!
On the low shore yonder,
Billows die in thunder,
'Neath a heaven all-dark;
While with dread we wonder
Winter should prevail,
Ere his time to be . . .—
Through his horn the gale,
Thunders o'er the sea!

Oh! lost mariners!
While the ship doth founder,
Through the darkness round her
Toward the shore one nears
(Ay, the low shore yonder!)
Brawny arms,— how frail! —
Stretched out helplessly! . . .—
Through his horn the gale
Thunders o'er the sea!

Oh! rash mariners!
While the ship's on-driven,
Sail on sail shrieks, riven
As with tooth or shears.
Not a star in heaven!
Strife's of none avail!
Deadly rocks to lee . . .—
Through his horn the gale
Thunders o'er the sea!

Lo! what sudden light?
'Tis the star beholden,
Brighter than all golden

Stars that gem the night:
 Torch God fires to embolden
 Mariners who hail
 It, while threateningly
 Through his horn the gale
 Thunders o'er the sea!

N. R. T.

LOVE'S TREACHEROUS POOL

(*"Jeune fille, l'amour."*)

DEAR Child, at first dear love's a mirror bright
 Whereo'er fair women bend with fond delight
 For bold or timorous gazing;
 With heavenly beams each heart it doth fulfil,
 Making all good things lovelier, all things ill
 From the rapt soul erasing.
 Then one bends nearer, 'tis a pool . . . and then
 A deep abysm! and clinging hands are vain
 To banks frail flowers are crowning!—
 Charming is love, but deadly! Fear it, Sweet,
 In a river first the foolish little feet
 Dip; then a fair form's drowning!

N. R. T.

THE ROSE AND THE GRAVE

(*"La tombe dit à la rose."*)

THE Grave said to the Rose:
 "What of the dews of dawn,
 Love's flower, what end is theirs?"
 "And what of spirits flown,
 The souls whereon doth close
 The tomb's mouth unawares?"
 The Rose said to the Grave.

The Rose said: "In the shade
From the dawn's tears is made

A perfume faint and strange,
Amber and honey sweet."

"And all the spirits fleet

Do suffer a sky-change,
More strangely than the dew,
To God's own angels new,"

The Grave said to the Rose.

ANDREW LANG.

LES RAYONS ET LES OMBRES.—1840

HOLYROOD PALACE

(“ *O palais, sois bénié.*”)

PALACE and ruin, bless thee evermore!
Grateful we bow thy gloomy tow'rs before;
For the old King of France¹ hath found in thee
That melancholy hospitality
Which in their royal fortune's evil day,
Stuarts and Bourbons to each other pay.
Fraser's Magazine.

THE HUMBLE HOME

(“ *L'église est vaste et haute.*”)

THE Church² is vast; its towering pride, its steeples loom on
on high;
The bristling stones with leaf and flower are sculptured won-
drously;
The portal glows respondent with its “rose,”
And 'neath the vault immense at evening swarm
Figures of angel, saint, or demon's form,
As oft a fearful world our dreams disclose.
But not the huge Cathedral's height, nor yet its vault sublime,

¹ King Charles X.

² The Cathedral Nôtre Dame of Paris; compare Book III. chap. I.
of the author's romance, “Nôtre Dame.”

Nor porch, nor glass, nor streaks of light, nor shadows deep
with time;

Nor massy towers, that fascinate mine eyes;

No, 'tis that spot — the mind's tranquillity —

Chamber wherefrom the song mounts cheerily,

Placed like a joyful nest well nigh the skies.

Yea! glorious is the Church, I ween, but Meekness dwelleth
here;

Less do I love the lofty oak than mossy nest it bear;

More dear is meadow breath than stormy wind:

And when my mind for meditation's meant,

The seaweed is preferred to the shore's extent,—

The swallow to the main it leaves behind.

Author of "Critical Essays."

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

(*"O dix-huitième siècle!"*)

O EIGHTEENTH CENTURY! by Heaven chastised!

Godless thou livedst, by God thy doom was fixed.

Thou in one ruin sword and sceptre mixed,

Then outraged love, and pity's claim despised.

Thy life a banquet — but its board a scaffold at the close,

Where far from Christ's beatic reign, Satanic deeds arose!

Thy writers, like thyself, by good men scorned —

Yet, from thy crimes, renown has decked thy name,

As the smoke emblumes the furnace flame,

A revolution's deeds have thine adorned!

Author of "Critical Essays."

STILL BE A CHILD

(*"O vous que votre âge défend."*)

IN youthful spirits wild,
Smile, for all beams on thee;
Sport, sing, be still the child,
The flower, the honey-bee.

Bring not the future near,
For Joy too soon declines —
What is man's mission here?
Toil, where no sunlight shines!

Our lot is hard, we know;
From eyes so gaily beaming,
Whence rays of beauty flow,
Salt tears most oft are streaming.

Free from emotions past,
All joy and hope possessing,
With mind in pureness cast,
Sweet ignorance confessing.

Plant, safe from winds and showers,
Heart with soft visions glowing,
In childhood's happy hours
A mother's rapture showing.

Loved by each anxious friend,
No carking care within —
When summer gambols end,
Thy winter sports begin.

Sweet poesy from heaven
Around thy form is placed,
A mother's beauty given,
By father's thought is graced!

Seize, then, each blissful second,
 Live, for joy sinks in night,
 And those whose tale is reckoned,
 Have had their days of light.

Then, oh! before we part,
 The poet's blessing take,
 Ere bleeds that angel heart
 Or child the woman make.

Dublin University Magazine.

THE POOL AND THE SOUL

(*"Comme dans les étangs."*)

As in some stagnant pool by forest-side,
 In human souls two things are oft descried;
 The sky,—which tints the surface of the pool
 With all its rays, and all its shadows cool;
 The basin next,—where gloomy, dark and deep,
 Through slime and mud black reptiles vaguely creep.

R. F. HODGSON.

YE MARINERS WHO SPREAD YOUR SAILS

(*"Matelôts, vous déployez les voiles."*)

YE mariners! ye mariners! each sail to the breeze unfurled,
 In joy or sorrow still pursue your course around the world;
 And when the stars next sunset shine, ye anxiously will gaze
 Upon the shore, a friend or foe, as the windy quarter lays.

YE envious souls, with spiteful tooth, the statue's base will
 bite;

Ye birds will sing, ye bending boughs with verdure glad the sight ;

The ivy root in the stone entwined, will cause old gates to fall ;
The church-bell sound to work or rest the villagers will call.

Ye glorious oaks will still increase in solitude profound,
Where the far west in distance lies as evening veils around ;
Ye willows, to the earth your arms in mournful trail will bend,
And back again your mirror'd forms the water's surface send.

Ye nests will oscillate beneath the youthful progeny ;
Embraced in furrows of the earth the germinating grain will lie ;
Ye lightning-torches still your streams will cast into the air,
Which like a troubled spirit's course float wildly here and there.

Ye thunder-peals will God proclaim, as doth the ocean wave ;
Ye violets will nourish still the flower that April gave ;
Upon your ambient tides will be man's sternest shadow cast ;
Your waters ever will roll on when man himself is past.

All things that are, or being have, or those that mutely lie,
Have each its course to follow out, or object to descry ;
Contributing its little share to that stupendous whole,
Where with man's teeming race combined creation's wonders roll.

The poet, too, will contemplate th' Almighty Father's love,
Who to our restless minds, with light and darkness from above,
Hath given the heavens that glorious urn of tranquil majesty,
Whence in unceasing stores we draw calm and serenity.

Author of "Critical Essays."

ON A FLEMISH WINDOW-PANE

(*"J'aime le carillon dans tes cités antiques."*)

WITHIN thy cities of the olden time
 Dearly I love to list the ringing chime,
 Thou faithful guardian of domestic worth,
 Noble old Flanders! where the rigid North
 A flush of rich meridian glow doth feel,
 Caught from reflected suns of bright Castile.
 The chime, the clinking chime! To Fancy's eye —
 Prompt her affections to personify —
 It is the fresh and frolic hour, arrayed
 In guise of Andalusian dancing maid,
 Appealing by a crevice fine and rare,
 As of a door oped in "th' incorporal air."
 She comes! o'er drowsy roofs, inert and dull,
 Shaking her lap, of silv'ry music full,
 Rousing without remorse the drones a-bed,
 Tripping like joyous bird with tiniest tread,
 Quiv'ring like dart that trembles in the targe,
 By a frail crystal stair, whose viewless marge
 Bears her slight footfall, tim'rous half, yet free,
 In innocent extravagance of glee
 The graceful elf alights from out the spheres,
 While the quick spirit — thing of eyes and ears —
 As now she goes, now comes, mounts, and anon
 Descends, those delicate degrees upon,
 Hears her melodious spirit from step to step run on.
Fraser's Magazine.

GASTIBELZA

(“*Gastibelza, l’homme à la carabine.*”)

GASTIBELZA, the man with the carabine,
Sung in this wise:

“Hath one of you here known Doña Sabine
With the gentle eyes?

Ay, dance and sing! For the night draws nigh
O’er hill and lea.

— *The wind that wails o’er yon mountain high
Will madden me.*

“Hath one of you here known Doña Sabine,
To me so dear?

Her mother, the old, old Maugrabine,
Erst made one fear,

For each night from the haunted cavern she’d cry
With an owlet’s glee.

— *The wind that wails o’er yon mountain high
Will madden me!*

“Ay, dance ye and sing! The hour’s delight
One needs must use.

How young she was, and those eyes how bright,
Which made one muse.—

To this old man whom a child leads by,
A coin cast ye!

— *The wind that wails o’er yon mountain high
Will madden me!*

“In sooth the queen for envy had wept,
Had she seen her, alack!

As o’er Toledo’s bridge she light-tript
In a corset black.

A chaplet of beads that charmed one's eye,
 From her neck hung free.
 — *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“The King, bedazed with her loveliness,
 Bespake one there:
 ‘For one only smile, for one only kiss,
 One tress of her hair,
 I would give my Spain and gold realms that lie
 O'er yonder sea!’
 — *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“I know not well if I loved this sweet,
 But well I know,
 If but one glance of her soul might greet
 My soul, I would go
 On the galleys to toil, on the galleys to die,
 Right cheerfully.
 — *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“One summer morn when all heaven was bright,
 All earth was gay,
 To the stream with her sister for dear delight,
 This sweet must stray.
 The foot of her comrade I there did spy,
 And saw *her* knee.
 — *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“When thus of me, a poor shepherd, was seen
 This glorious May,
 Methought, 'tis Cleopatra the queen
 Who once, they say,

Won Cæsar, great Emperor of Germany,
Her slave to be.
— *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“Dance ye and sing — lo, the night doth fall!
Sabine, one while
Her dovelike beauty, her soul, her all,
Her angel-smile,
For a ring of gold to the Count hath sold —
Saldane is he.
— *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“On this bench for a moment suffer me rest,—
Full-weary each limb.
With this Count then fled this loveliest —
Alas! with him!
By the road that leads . . . but I know not, I,
Where then fled she.
— *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Will madden me!

“I saw her pass at the death of day,
And all was night.
And now I wander and weary alway,
In pain's despite.
My soul's on quest; my dagger's put by,
Ne'er-used to be.
— *The wind that wails o'er yon mountain high*
Has maddened me!”

N. R. T.

GUITAR SONG

(*"Comment, disaient-ils."*)

How shall we flee sorrow — flee sorrow? said he.

How, how! How shall we flee sorrow — flee sorrow? said he.

How — how — how? answered she.

How shall we see pleasure — see pleasure? said he.

How, how! How shall we see pleasure — see pleasure? said
he.

Dream — dream — dream! answered she.

How shall we be happy — be happy? said he.

How, how! How shall we be happy — be happy? said he.

Love — love — love! whispered she.

EVELYN JERROLD.

COME WHEN I SLEEP

(*"Oh, quand je dors."*)

Oh! when I sleep, come near my resting-place,

As Laura came to bless her poet's heart,

And let thy breath in passing touch my face —

At once a space

My lips will part.

And on my brow where too long weighed supreme

A vision — haply spent now — black as night,

Let thy look as a star arise and beam —

At once my dream

Will seem of light.

Then press my lips, where plays a flame of bliss —
 A pure and holy love-light — and forsake
 The angel for the woman in a kiss —
 At once, I wis,
 My soul will wake!

WM. W. TOMLINSON.

EARLY LOVE REVISITED

(" *O douleur! j'ai voulu savoir.*")

I HAVE wished in the grief of my heart to know
 If the vase yet treasured that nectar so clear,
 And to see what this beautiful valley could show
 Of all that was once to my soul most dear.
 In how short a span doth all Nature change,
 How quickly she smoothes with her hand serene —
 And how rarely she snaps, in her ceaseless range,
 The links that bound our hearts to the scene.

Our beautiful bowers are all laid waste ;
 The fir is felled that our names once bore ;
 Our rows of roses, by urchins haste,
 Are destroyed where they leap the barrier o'er.
 The fount is walled in where, at noonday pride,
 She so gaily drank, from the wood descending ;
 In her fairy hand was transformed the tide,
 And it turned to pearls through her fingers wending.

The wild, rugged path is paved with spars.
 Where erst in the sand her footsteps were traced,
 When so small were the prints that the surface mars,
 That they seemed *to smile* ere by mine effaced.
 The bank on the side of the road, day by day,
 Where of old she awaited my loved approach,
 Is now become the traveller's way
 To avoid the track of the thundering coach.

Here the forest contracts, there the mead extends,
 Of all that was ours, there is little left —
 Like the ashes that wildly are whisked by winds,
 Of all souvenirs is the place bereft.
 Do we live no more — is our hour then gone?
 Will it give back nought to our hungry cry?
 The breeze answers my call with a mocking tone,
 The house that was mine makes no reply.

True! others shall pass, as we have passed,
 As we have come, so others shall meet,
 And the dream that our mind had sketched in haste,
 Shall others continue, but never complete.
 For none upon earth can achieve his scheme,
 The best as the worst are futile here:
 We awake at the selfsame point of the dream —
 All is here begun, and finished elsewhere.

Yes! others shall come in the bloom of the heart,
 To enjoy in this pure and happy retreat,
 All that nature to timid love can impart
 Of solemn repose and communion sweet.
 In *our* fields, in *our* paths, shall strangers stray,
 In *thy* wood, my dearest, new lovers go lost,
 And other fair forms in the stream shall play
 Which of old thy delicate feet have crossed.
Author of "Critical Essays."

SWEET MEMORY OF LOVE

(*"Toutes les passions s'éloignent avec l'âge."*)

As life wanes on, the passions slow depart,
 One with his grinning mask, one with his steel;
 Like to a strolling troupe of Thespian art,
 Whose pace decreases, winding past the hill.

But nought can Love's all charming power efface,
 That light, our misty tracks suspended o'er,
 In joy thou'rt ours, more dear thy tearful grace,
 The young may curse thee, but the old adore.

But when the weight of years bow down the head,
 And man feels all his energies decline,
 His projects gone, himself tomb'd with the dead,
 Where virtues lie, nor more illusions shine,
 When all our lofty thoughts dispersed and o'er,
 We count within our hearts so near congealed,
 Each grief that's past, each dream, exhausted ore!
 As counting dead upon the battle-field.

As one who walks by the lamp's flickering blaze,
 Far from the hum of men, the joys of earth —
 Our mind arrives at last by tortuous ways
 At that drear gulf where but despair has birth.
 E'en there, amid the darkness of that night,
 When all seems closing round in empty air,
 Is seen through thickening gloom one trembling light!
 'Tis Love's sweet memory that lingers there!
Author of "Critical Essays."

THE MARBLE FAUN

(*"Il semblait grelotter."*)

HE seemed to shiver, for the wind was keen.
 'Twas a poor statue underneath a mass
 Of leafless branches, with a blackened back
 And a green foot — an isolated Faun
 In old deserted park, who, bending forward,
 Half-merged himself in the entangled boughs,
 Half in his marble settings. He was there,
 Pensive, and bound to earth; and, as all things
 Devoid of movement, he was there — forgotten.

Trees were around him, whipped by icy blasts —
 Gigantic chestnuts, without leaf or bird,
 And, like himself, grown old in that same place.
 Through the dark network of their undergrowth,
 Pallid his aspect; and the earth was brown.
 Starless and moonless, a rough winter's night
 Was letting down her lappets o'er the mist.
 This — nothing more: old Faun, dull sky, dark wood.

Poor, helpless marble, how I've pitied it!
 Less often man — the harder of the two.

So, then, without a word that might offend
 His ear deformed — for well the marble hears
 The voice of thought — I said to him: "You hail
 From the gay amorous age. O Faun, what saw you
 When you were happy? Were you of the Court?"

"Speak to me, comely Faun, as you would speak
 To tree, or zephyr, or untrodden grass.
 Have you, O Greek, O mocker of old days,
 Have you not sometimes with that oblique eye
 Winked at the Farnese Hercules? — Alone,
 Have you, O Faun, considerably turned
 From side to side when counsel-seekers came,
 And now advised as shepherd, now as satyr? —
 Have you sometimes, upon this very bench,
 Seen, at mid-day, Vincent de Paul instilling
 Grace into Gondi? — Have you ever thrown
 That searching glance on Louis with Fontange,
 On Anne with Buckingham; and did they not
 Start, with flushed cheeks, to hear your laugh ring forth
 From corner of the wood? — Was your advice
 As to the thyrsis or the ivy asked,
 When, in grand ballet of fantastic form,
 God Phœbus, or God Pan, and all his court,
 Turned the fair head of the proud Montespan,

Calling her Amaryllis? — La Fontaine,
 Flying the courtiers' ears of stone, came he,
 Tears on his eyelids, to reveal to you
 The sorrows of his nymphs of Vaux? — What said
 Boileau to you — to you — O lettered Faun,
 Who once with Virgil, in the Eclogue, held
 That charming dialogue? — Say, have you seen
 Young beauties sporting on the sward? — Have you
 Been honoured with a sight of Molière
 In dreamy mood? — Has he perchance, at eve,
 When here the thinker homeward went, has he,
 Who — seeing souls all naked — could not fear
 Your nudity, in his inquiring mind,
 Confronted you with Man? ”

Under the thickly-tangled branches, thus
 Did I speak to him; he no answer gave.

I shook my head, and moved myself away;
 Then, from the copses, and from secret caves
 Hid in the wood, methought a ghostly voice
 Came forth and woke an echo in my soul,
 As in the hollow of an amphora.

“Imprudent poet,” thus it seemed to say,
 “What dost thou here? Leave the forsaken Fauns
 In peace beneath their trees! Dost thou not know,
 Poet, that ever it is impious deemed,
 In desert spots where drowsy shades repose —
 Though love itself might prompt thee — to shake down
 The moss that hangs from ruined centuries,
 And, with the vain noise of thine ill-timed words,
 To mar the recollections of the dead? ”

Then to the gardens all enwrapped in mist
 I hurried, dreaming of the vanished days,
 And still behind me — hieroglyph obscure
 Of antique alphabet — the lonely Faun
 Held to his laughter, through the falling night.

I went my way ; but yet — in saddened spirit
Pondering on all that had my vision crossed,
Leaves of old summers, fair ones of old time —
Through all, at distance, would my fancy see,
In the woods, statues ; shadows in the past !

WILLIAM YOUNG.

BABY'S SEASIDE GRAVE

(“ *Vieux lierre, frais gazon.*”)

BROWN ivy old, grass freshly green, bright flowers ;
Fane, where the soul sees One it elsewhere dreams ;
Gay insects murmuring music warm long hours
To the tired shepherd drowsed with summer's beams ;

Winds, waves, aye blending wild sweet harmony ;
Woods wherein brightest noontide pales to even ;
Ye fruits that gleam from out the dusk-leaved tree ;
Ye stars that gleam from out mysterious heaven ;

Birds with quick joyous cries, billows soft-sighing ;
Cold lizard of the hottest nook still fain ;
Fields unto ocean's bounteous love replying,—
One giving silvery pearl, one golden grain ;

Nature, that wak'st to life, that lull'st to death ;
Leaf-cradled nests round which the air scarce creeps ;
Above this mossy cradle hold your breath ; —
Leave the child sleeping while its mother weeps !

N. R. T.

A. L.

(*"Toute espérance, Enfant."*)

EACH hope, dear child, is a slender reed.

God holds in His hand frail threads of our days,
And divides them at pleasure, and takes no heed

That, the thread being cut, our joy falls from its place:
In each cradle on earth
A death hath birth.

Erewhile, seest thou, the future, pure light,

Shone sweetly before my young spirit afire,—

Bright bird on the wave, in heaven star bright,

Splendid bloom 'mid the shadow athrob with desire:

This vision, my sweet,

How lovely! how fleet!

If, haply, nigh thee one dreamfully weep,

Let the tears fall, nor do thou ask why.

Sweet 'tis to weep,— ay, the bright drops keep

Soft melody 'midst the tempestuous world-cry:

O child, every tear

Leaves *some* sin clear!

N. R. T.

LES CHATIMENTS.—1853

ART AND THE PEOPLE

I.

ART, 'tis a glory, a delight;
I' the tempest it holds fire-flight,
It irradiates the deep blue sky.
Art, splendour infinite,
On the brow of the People doth sit,
As a star in God's heaven most high.

Art, 'tis a broad-flowered plain
Where Peace holds belovèd reign;
'Tis the passionate unison
Of music the city hath made
With the country, the man with the maid,
All sweet songs made perfect in one!

Art, 'tis Humanity's thought
Which shatters chains century-wrought!
Art, 'tis the conqueror sweet!
Unto Art, each world-river, each sea!
Slave-People, 'tis Art makes free;
Free People, 'tis Art makes great!

II.

O chivalrous France, without cease
Chant loudly thy hymn of peace,—
Chant, with eyes fixed on the sky!

Thy joyous voice and profound
 Through the slumbering world doth resound . . .
 O noble People, chant high!

True People, chant gladly the dawn.
 At even raise song as at morn!
 After labour sweet singing should be.
 Laugh for the century o'erthrown!
 Sing love in a tender tone,
 And loudlier chant Liberty!

Chant Italy sacred and sweet,
 Poor Poland, slain sons at her feet,
 Naples, whose heart-blood outpours,
 Hungary, the Russian's base vaunt . . . —
 O tyrants! the People doth chant
 Even as the lion roars!

N. R. T.

POOR LITTLE CHILDREN

(*"La femelle! elle est morte."*)

MOTHER birdie stiff and cold,
 Puss has hushed the other's singing;
 Winds go whistling o'er the wold,—
 Empty nest in sport a-flinging.
 Poor little birdies!

Faithless shepherd strayed afar,
 Playful dog the gadflies catching;
 Wolves bound boldly o'er the bar,
 Not a friend the fold is watching—
 Poor little lambkins!

Father into prison fell,
 Mother begging through the parish;

Baby's cot they, too, will sell,—
 Who will now feed, clothe and cherish?
 Poor little children!

H. L. W.

APOSTROPHE TO NATURE

(“ *O Soleil!* ”)

O SUN! bright face aye-undefiled;
 O flowers i' the valley blooming wild;
 Caverns, dim haunt of Solitude;
 Perfume whereby one's step's beguiled
 Deep, deep into the sombre wood;—

O sacred mounts that heavenward climb,
 White as a temple-front, sublime;
 Old oaks, that centuries' might inherit,—
 Somewhat whereof I feel (what time
 'Neath you I stand) endues *my* spirit;—

O Virgin forest, crystal spring,
 Lake where no storm for long can fling
 Darkness, clear heaven-reflecting face;—
 Pure soul of Nature unslumbering,
 What think you of this bandit base?

N. R. T.

THE EXILE'S CHOICE

(“ *Puisque le juste est dans l'abîme.* ”)

SINCE Justice slumbers in the abysm,
 Since the Crime's crowned with despotism,
 Since all most upright souls are smitten,

Since proudest souls are bowed for shame,
Since on the walls in lines of flame
My country's dark dishonour's written;

O grand Republic of our sires,
Pantheon filled with sacred fires,
In the free azure golden dome,
Temple with Shades immortal thronged,
Since thus thy glory they have wronged,
With "Empire" staining Freedom's home;

Since in my country each soul born
Is base; since there are laughed to scorn
The true, the pure, the great, the brave,
The indignant eyes of history,
Honour, law, right, and liberty,
And those,— alas! — within the grave;

Solitude, exile! I love them!
Sorrow, be thou my diadem!
Poverty love I,— for 'tis pride!
My rugged home winds beat upon;
And even that awful Statue wan
Aye seated silent by my side.

I love the woe that proves me strong;
That shadow of fate which all ye throng,
O ye to whom high hearts aye bow,—
Faith, Virtue veiled, stern Dignity,
And thou, proud Exile, Liberty,
And, nobler yet, Devotion, thou!

I love this islet lonely, bold,
Jersey, wherever England's old
Free banner doth the storm-blast brave;
Yon darkling ocean's ebb and flow,
Its vessels, each a wandering plough,
Whose mystic furrow is the wave.

I love thy gull, with snowy wing
 In pearls to the wind blithe scattering,
 O ocean vast, thy sunny spray;
 Who darts beneath huge billows gaping,
 Soon from those monstrous throats escaping
 As a soul from sorrow flits away!

I love the rock — how solemn, stern!
 Thence hearkening aye the plaint eterne,
 On the wild air around me shed,
 Ever the sullen night outpours,—
 Of waves that sob on sombre shores,
 Of mothers mourning children dead!

N. R. T.

A LAMENT

(“*Sentiers où l’herbe se balance.*”)

O PATHS whereon wild grasses wave!
 O valleys! hillsides! forests hoar!
 Why are ye silent as the grave?
 For One, who came, and comes no more!

Why is thy window closed of late?
 And why thy garden in its sere?
 O house! where doth thy master wait?
 I only know he is not here.

Good dog! thou watchest; yet no hand
 Will feed thee. In the house is none.
 Whom weepst thou? child! My father. And
 O wife! whom weepst thou? The Gone.

Where is he gone? Into the dark.—
 O sad, and ever-plaining surge!
 Whence art thou? From the convict-bark.
 And why thy mournful voice? A dirge.

EDWIN ARNOLD, C.S.I.

THE IMPERIAL MANTLE ¹

(*"Oh, vous dont le travail est joie."*)

O YE whose labour is bliss alway,
 Blithe-wingèd ones who have for prey
 But odorous breaths of azure skies,
 Who, ere December come, far flee,
 Sweet thieves of sweetest blooms, O ye
 Who bear to men the honey prize,

Chaste sippers of the morning dew,
 Who visit 'neath noon's amorous blue
 The lily glowing like a star,—
 Fond sisters of May's flowerets bright,
 Bees, blithesome daughters of the light,
 From that foul mantle flit afar!

Winged warriors, rush upon that man!
 O busy toilers, noble clan,
 For duty and virtue arduous,
 With golden wings, keen darts of flame,
 Swarm round that dull foul thing of shame,
 And hiss:—"For what hast taken us?"

"Accurst! We are the honey-bees!
 Our hives the pride of cottages,
 From homeliest flowers our sweetest sips!
 Though oft, what time warm June discloses
 For love of us his loveliest roses,
 We're fain to alight on Plato's lips!

¹ This poem alludes to the use of the bee as a badge by Napoleon III.

“What’s born of mire to mire’s inclined.
 Go, in his lair Tiberius find,
 Charles neuf his balcony upon.
 Go, go, Hymettus’ bees scarce grace
 Your purple, there behoves you place
 The black foul swarm of Montfaucon!”

And all together sting him there,—
 O tiny warriors of the air
 Sting blind this traitor soulless, base;
 Upon him swarm from far and near,
 And, since the men of France have fear,
 Let bees of France the monster chase!

N. R. T.

SEA-SONG OF THE EXILES

(“*Adieu, patrie!*”)

DEAR land, farewell!
 Waves surge and swell.
 Dear land, farewell,—
 Blue sky!

Farewell, white Cot whence the ripe grapes fall,
 Gold blooms that bask on the mossy wall!

Dear land, farewell!
 Plain, valley, and hill!
 Dear land, farewell,—
 Blue sky!

Dear land, farewell!
 Waves surge and swell.
 Dear land, farewell,—
 Blue sky!

Farewell, Betrothed with the pure pale brow;
'Neath sombre heaven dark billows we plough.

Dear land, farewell!
In thee our loves dwell;
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Dear land, farewell!
Waves surge and swell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

Our eyes, whose tears all brightness blot,
Leave the dark wave for a darker lot!

Dear land, farewell!
In our heart's a knell.
Dear land, farewell,—
Blue sky!

N. R. T.

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

(“*Il neigeait.*”)

It snowed. A defeat was our conquest red!
For once the eagle was hanging its head.
Sad days! the Emperor turned slowly his back
On smoking Moscow, blent orange and black.
The winter burst, avalanche-like, to reign
Over the endless blanched sheet of the plain.
Nor chief nor banner in order could keep,
The wolves of warfare were 'wildered like sheep.
The wings from centre could hardly be known
Through snow o'er horses and carts o'erthrown,

Where froze the wounded. In the bivouacs forlorn
Strange sights and gruesome met the breaking morn :
Mute were the bugles, while the men bestrode
Steeds turned to marble, unheading the goad.
The shells and bullets came down with the snow
As though the heavens hated these poor troops below.
Surprised at trembling, though it was with cold,
Who ne'er had trembled out of fear, the veterans bold
Marched stern ; to grizzled moustache hoarfrost clung
'Neath banners that in leaden masses hung.

It snowed, went snowing still. And chill the breeze
Whistled upon the glassy endless seas,
Where naked feet on, on for ever went,
With naught to eat, and not a sheltering tent.
They were not living troops as seen in war,
But merely phantoms of a dream, afar
In darkness wandering, amid the vapour dim,—
A mystery ; of shadows a procession grim,
Nearing a blackening sky, unto its rim.
Frightful, since boundless, solitude behold
Where only Nemesis wove, mute and cold,
A net all snowy with its soft meshes dense,
A shroud of magnitude for host immense ;
Till every one felt as if left alone
In a wide wilderness where no light shone,
To die, with pity none, and none to see
That from this mournful realm none should get free.
Their foes the frozen North and Czar — That, worst.
Cannon were broken up in haste accurst
To burn the frames and make the pale fire high,
Where those lay down who never woke or woke to die.
Sad and commingled, groups that blindly fled
Were swallowed smoothly by the desert dread.

'Neath folds of blankness, monuments were raised
O'er regiments. And History, amazed,

Could not record the ruin of this retreat,
 Unlike a downfall known before or the defeat
 Of Hannibal — reversed and wrapped in gloom!
 Of Attila, when nations met their doom!
 Perished an army — fled French glory then,
 Though there the Emperor! he stood and gazed
 At the wild havoc, like a monarch dazed
 In woodland hoar, who felt the shrieking saw —
 He, living oak, beheld his branches fall, with awe.
 Chiefs, soldiers, comrades died. But still warm love
 Kept those that rose all dastard fear above,
 As on his tent they saw his shadow pass —
 Backwards and forwards, for they credited, alas!
 His fortune's star! it could not, could not be
 That he had not his work to do — a destiny?
 To hurl him headlong from his high estate,
 Would be high treason in his bondman, Fate.
 But all the while he felt himself alone,
 Stunned with disasters few have ever known.
 Sudden, a fear came o'er his troubled soul,
 What more was written on the Future's scroll?
 Was this an expiation? It must be, yea!
 He turned to God for one enlightening ray.
 "Is this the vengeance, Lord of Hosts?" he sighed,
 But the first murmur on his parched lips died.
 "Is this the vengeance? Must my glory set?"
 A pause: his name was called; of flame a jet
 Sprang in the darkness;— a Voice answered: "No!
 Not yet."

Outside still fell the smothering snow.
 Was it a voice indeed? or but a dream?
 It was the vulture's, but how like the *sea-bird's* scream.
TORU DUTT.

HYMN OF THE TRANSPORTED

(*"Prions!"*)

LET us pray! Lo, the shadow serene!
 God, toward Thee our arms are upraised and our eyes.
 They who proffer Thee here their tears and their chain
 Are the most sorrowful Thy sorrow tries.
 Most honour have they being possessed of most pain.

Let us suffer! The crime will take flight.
 Birds passing,—our cottages!
 Winds passing,—on weary knees
 Mothers, sisters, weep there day and night!
 Winds, tell them our miseries!
 Birds, bear our heart's love to their sight!

Our thought is uplifted to Thee,
 God! The proscribed we beseech thee forget,
 But give back her old glory to France whom we see
 Shame-smitten; ay! slay us, us sorrow-beset,
 Hot day but consigns to chill night's agony!

Let us suffer! The crime —

As a bowman striketh a mark,
 The fierce sun smites us with shafts of fire;
 After dire day-labour, no sleep in night dark;
 The bat that takes wing from the marish-mire,—
 Fever,—flaps noiseless our brows — and leaves stark.

Let us suffer! The crime —

Athirst! The scant water-drop burns!
 An-hungered! — black bread! work, work, ye accurst!
 At each stroke of the pick wild laughter returns

Loud-echoed; lo, from the soil Death hath burst,
Round a man folds arms, and to sleep anew turns.

Let us suffer! The crime —

What matters it! Nothing can tame
Us; we are tortured and we are content.
And we thank high God toward Whom like flame
Our hymn burneth, that unto us suffering is sent,
When all they that endure not suffering bear shame.

Let us suffer! The crime —

Live the Republic world-great!
Peace to the vast mysterious even!
Peace to the dead sweet slumber doth sate!
To wan ocean peace, that blends beneath heaven
Africa's sob with Cayenne's wail of hate!

Let us suffer! The crime will take flight.
Birds passing,— our cottages!
Winds passing,— on weary knees
Mothers, sisters, weep there day and night!
Winds, tell them our miseries!
Birds, bear our heart's love to their sight!

N. R. T.

THE OCEAN'S SONG

(“*Nous nous promenions à Rozel-Tower.*”)

WE walked amongst the ruins famed in story
Of Rozel-Tower,
And saw the boundless waters stretch in glory
And heave in power,

O ocean vast! we heard thy song with wonder,
Whilst waves marked time.

“Appear, O Truth!” thou sang’st with tone of thunder,
“And shine sublime!

“The world’s enslaved and hunted down by beagles,—
To despots sold,
Souls of deep thinkers, soar like mighty eagles,
The Right uphold.

“Be born; arise; o’er earth and wild waves bounding
Peoples and suns!
Let darkness vanish; — tocsins be resounding,
And flash, ye guns!

“And you,—who love no pomps of fog, or glamour,
Who fear no shocks,
Brave foam and lightning, hurricane and clamour,
Exiles — the rocks!”

TORU DUTT.

THE TRUMPETS OF THE MIND

(“*Sonnez, clairons de la pensée!*”)

SOUND, sound for ever, Clarions of Thought!

When Joshua ’gainst the high-walled city fought,
He marched around it with his banner high,
His troops in serried order following nigh,
But not a sword was drawn, no shaft outsprang,
Only the trumpets the shrill onset rang,
At the first blast, smiled scornfully the king,
And at the second sneered, half-wondering:

“Hop’st thou with noise my stronghold to break down?”
At the third round, the ark of old renown

Swept forward, still the trumpets sounding loud,
 And then the troops with ensigns waving proud.
 Stepped out upon the old walls children dark
 With horns to mock the notes and hoot the ark.
 At the fourth turn, braving the Israelites,
 Women appeared upon the crenelated heights —
 Those battlements embrowned with age and rust —
 And hurled upon the Hebrews stones and dust,
 And spun and sang when weary of the game.
 At the fifth circuit came the blind and lame,
 And with wild uproar clamorous and high
 Railed at the clarion ringing to the sky.
 At the sixth time, upon a tower's tall crest,
 So high that there the eagle built his nest,
 So hard that on it lightning lit in vain,
 Appeared in merriment the king again:
 "These Hebrew Jews musicians are, meseems!"
 He scoffed, loud laughing, "but they live on dreams."
 The princes laughed submissive to the king,
 Laughed all the courtiers in their glittering ring,
 And thence the laughter spread through all the town.

At the seventh blast — the city walls fell down.

TORU DUTT.

AFTER THE COUP D'ETAT

(*"Devant les trahisons."*)

BEFORE foul treachery and heads hung down,
 I'll fold my arms, indignant but serene.
 Oh! faith in fallen things — be thou my crown,
 My force, my joy, my prop on which I lean:

Yes, whilst *he's* there, or struggle some or fall,
 O France, dear France, for whom I weep in vain,

Tomb of my sires, nest of my loves — my all,
I ne'er shall see thee with these eyes again.

I shall not see thy sad, sad sounding shore,
France, save my duty, I shall all forget;
Amongst the true and tried, I'll tug my oar,
And rest proscribed to brand the fawning set.

O bitter exile, hard, without a term,
Thee I accept, nor seek nor care to know
Who have down-truckled 'mid the men deemed firm,
And who have fled that should have fought the foe.

If true a thousand stand, with them I stand;
A hundred? 'tis enough: we'll Sylla brave;
Ten? put my name down foremost in the band;
One? well, alone — until I find my grave.

TORU DUTT.

PATRIA¹

(“ *Là-haut, qui sourit?* ”)

WHO smiles there? Is it
A stray spirit,
Or woman fair?
Sombre, yet soft the brow!
Bow, nations, bow;
O soul in air,
Speak — what art thou?

In grief the fair face seems —
What means those sudden gleams?
Our antique pride from dreams
Starts up, and beams

¹ Written to music by Beethoven.

Its conquering glance,—
To make our sad hearts dance,
And wake in woods hushed long
The wild bird's song.
Angel of Day!
Our Hope, Love, Stay,
Thy countenance
 Lights land and sea
 Eternally,
Thy name is France
 Or Verity.

Fair angel in thy glass
When vile things move or pass,
Clouds in the skies amass;
Terrible, alas!
Thy stern commands are then:
"Form your battalions, men,
The flag display!"
And all obey.
Angel of might
Sent kings to smite,
The words in dark skies glance,
 "Mené, Mené," hiss
 Bolts that never miss!
Thy name is France,
 Or Nemesis.

As halcyons in May,
O nations, in his ray
Float and bask for aye,
Nor know decay!
One arm upraised to heaven
Seals the past forgiven;
One holds a sword
To quell hell's horde,
Angel of God!

Thy wings stretch broad
As heaven's expanse!
To shield and free
Humanity!
Thy name is France,
Or, Liberty!

SUNRISE

(*"Il est des jours abjects."*)

FOUL times there are, when nations spiritless
Throw honour away
For tinsel glory; to base happiness
A mournful prey.

Then from the nations, fain of lustful rest,
Dull slavery's dreams,
All virtue ebbs, as from a sponge tight-pressed
Clear water streams.

Then men, to vice and folly docile slaves,
Aye lowly-inclined,
Ape the vile fearful reed that stoops and waves
For every wind.

Then feasts and kisses; nought that saith the soul
Stirs shame or dread;
One drinks, one eats, one sings, one skips — is foul
And comforted.

Crime, ministered to by loathsome lackeys, reigns;
Yea, 'neath God's fires
Laughs; and ye shiver, sombre dread remains
Of glorious sires.

All life seems foul, with vice intoxicate,
 Aye, thus to be: —
 Sudden a clarion unto all winds elate
 Peals *Liberty!*

And the dull world whose soul this blast doth smite,
 Is like to one
 Drunken all night, upstaggering 'neath the light
 O' the risen sun!

N. R. T.

THE UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC

(“ *Temps futurs!* ”)

O vision of the coming time!
 When man has 'scaped the trackless slime
 And reached the desert spring;
 When sands are crossed, the sward invites
 The worn to rest 'mid rare delights
 And gratefully to sing.

E'en now the eye that's levelled high,
 Though dimly, can the hope espy
 So solid soon, one day;
 For every chain must then be broke,
 And hatred none will dare evoke,
 And June shall scatter May.

E'en now amid our misery
 The germ of Union many see,
 And through the hedge of thorn,
 Like to a bee that dawn awakes,
 On, Progress strides o'er shattered stakes,
 With solemn, scathing scorn.

Behold the blackness shrink, and flee!
Behold the world rise up so free
Of coronetted things!
Whilst o'er the distant youthful States,
Like Amazonian bosom-plates,
Spread Freedom's shielding wings.

Ye, liberated lands, we hail!
Your sails are whole despite the gale!
Your masts are firm, and will not fail —
The triumph follows pain!
Hear forges roar! the hammer clanks —
It beats the time to nations' thanks —
At last, a *peaceful* strain!

'Tis rust, not gore, that gnaws the guns,
And shattered shells are but the runs
Where warring insects cope;
And all the headsman's racks and blades
And pincers, tools of tyrants' aids,
Are buried with the rope.

Upon the skyline glows i' the dark
The Sun that now is but a spark;
But soon will be unfurled —
The glorious banner of us all,
The flag that rises ne'er to fall,
Republic of the World!

LES CONTEMPLATIONS.—1830-'56

TO MY DAUGHTER

(“ *O mon enfant, tu vois, je me soumets.*”)

MY child, thou seest, I am content to wait.
So be thou too; with calm secluded mind:
Happy? ah no! nor e'er with hope elate,—
But still resigned!

Be humbly good, and lift a blameless brow.
As morning pours the sunlight in the skies,
Suffer, my child, thy sunnier spirit glow
Through azure eyes!

Victorious, happy, is none in this world's strife.
Time unto all a fickle lord doth prove;
And Time's a shadow, and, child, our little life
Is made thereof.

All men, alas! grow weary by the way.
For to be happy — O fate unkind! — to all
All's lacking. And, though all were granted, say
What thing so small!

And yet this little thing with anxious care
Is sought for ceaselessly, by good and vile:
A little gold, a word, a name to wear,
A loving smile!

The mightiest king o'er love and joy is powerless;
Vast deserts yearn for but one drop of rain.
Man is a well spring brims, till summer, showerless,
Makes void again.

Behold these kings of thought we divinize,—
These heroes, brows transcendent over night,
Names at whose clarion-sound most sombre skies
Flash lightning-bright!

When once they have fulfilled their glorious doom,
Earth for awhile a little brighter made,
They find, for all reward, within the tomb
A little shade.

Kind heaven, that knows our struggles and our sorrows,
Hath pity on our days, sonorous, vain,
Bathing with tears bright dawn of all our morrows
Whose noon is pain.

God lightens aye the path whereon we go;
Still what He is, what we are, brings to mind;
One law revealed in all things here below,
As in mankind!

That steadfast law, bright-stablishèd above,
On every soul its heavenly beams lets fall:—
Hate nothing, O my child, but all things love,
Or pity all!

N. R. T.

CHILDHOOD

(" L'enfant chantait.")

THE small child sang; the mother, outstretched on the low
bed,
With anguish moaned,— fair Form pain should possess
not long;
For, ever nigher, Death hovered around her head:
I hearkened there this moan, and heard even there that
song.

The child was but five years, and, close to the lattice, aye
Made a sweet noise with games and with his laughter
bright;
And the wan mother, beside this being the livelong day
Carolling joyously, coughed hoarsely all the night.

The mother went to sleep with them that sleep away;
And the blithe little lad began anew to sing . . .
Sorrow is like a fruit: God doth not therewith weigh
Earthward the branch strong yet but for the blossoming.
N. R. T.

HOW BUTTERFLIES ARE BORN

(" Comme le matin rit sur les roses.")

THE dawn is smiling on the dew that covers
The tearful roses — lo, the little lovers —
That kiss the buds and all the flutterings
In jasmine bloom, and privet, of white wings
That go and come, and fly, and peep, and hide

With muffled music, murmured far and wide!
Ah, Springtime, when we think of all the lays
That dreamy lovers send to dreamy Mays,
Of the proud hearts within a billet bound,
Of all the soft silk paper that men wound,
The messages of love that mortals write,
Filled with intoxication of delight,
Written in April, and before the Maytime
Shredded and flown, playthings for the winds' playtime.
We dream that all white butterflies above,
Who seek through clouds or waters souls to love,
And leave their lady mistress to despair,
To flirt with flowers, as tender and more fair,
Are but torn love-letters, that through the skies
Flutter, and float, and change to Butterflies.

ANDREW LANG.

HAVE YOU NOTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

(*" Si vous n'avez rien à me dire."*)

SPEAK, if you love me, gentle maiden!
Or haunt no more my lone retreat.
If not for me thy heart be laden,
Why trouble mine with smiles so sweet?

Ah! tell me why so mute, fair maiden,
Whene'er as thus so oft we meet?
If not for me thy heart be, Aideen,
Why trouble mine with smiles so sweet?

Why, when my hand unconscious pressing,
Still keep untold the maiden dream?
In fancy thou art thus caressing
The while we wander by the stream.

If thou art pained when I am near thee,
 Why in my path so often stray?
 For in my heart I love yet fear thee,
 And fain would fly, yet fondly stay.

C. H. KENNY.

AT EVENING

(*"Mon bras pressait."*)

My arm pressed gently thy form, slight
 And supple as the slender reed;
 Thy sweet heart quivered, even as might
 A bird's wing freed.

A long while silent, we beheld
 The day from heaven softly move.
 What then our trembling souls fulfilled?
 Love! O our love!

Even as an angel that grows bright
 And brighter, thou didst gaze on me,
 Till thy star-look shone 'mid my night
 Too sweet to see.

N. R. T.

THE LOVE-SONG

(*"Viens! une flute."*)

COME, O come! an unseen flute
 'Mid the orchard-bowers is sighing!—
 Ah! the song that makes most mute
 Is the shepherd-song soft-dying.

Breezes, 'neath the elm vine-clad
Gently fret the river-shadows.—
Ah! the song that makes most glad
Is the bird-song from the meadows.

Be no care in thy bright breast.
Let us love! Ay, love for ever!—
Ah! the song the loveliest
Is the love-song silenced never.

R. N. T.

DEATH, IN LIFE

(“*Ceux-ci partent.*”)

WE pass — these sleep
Beneath the shade where deep-leaved boughs
Bend o'er the furrows the Great Reaper ploughs,
And gentle summer winds in mazy sweep
Whirl in eddying waves
The dead leaves o'er the graves.

And the living sigh:
Forgotten ones, so soon your memories die.
Ye never more may list the wild bird's song,
Or mingle in the crowded city-throng.
Ye must ever dwell in gloom,
'Mid the silence of the tomb.

And the dead reply:
God giveth us His life. Ye die,
Your barren lives are tilled with tears,
For glory, ye are clad with fears.
Oh, living ones! oh, earthly shades!
We live; your beauty clouds and fades.

THE FOUNTAIN

(“ *Un lion habitait près d’une source.*”)

ANIGH a desert-spring a lion dwelt; an eagle
Drank from the same clear flow.

One morn it chanced two warrior-chiefs of aspect regal —
Often fate suffers so —

Drew nigh this spring which with its broad and shadowy
palms

Allures the traveller,
And, recognizing each his foe, flashed sudden arms,
Fought,— and fell bleeding there.

Then, while they breathed their last, the eagle, hovering
O’er lowly heads, shrilled loud:

“ Ye found the whole wide earth for you too small a thing,
That are less than a little cloud!

“ O Princes! and your bones, strong yester-night with youth,
Will be, to-morrow morn,

Stones mingled with the stones o’ the track, but sooner in
sooth

By travellers’ footing worn.

“ Ye fools! for what great end was this bright-flashing strife,
Your duel fierce and rude! . . .

I, th’ Eagle, and yon lion lead a peaceful life
In this vast solitude.

“ Both come to quench our thirst at the same crystal fount,
Kings in the same dominions;

He roams in lordly wise the prairie, forest, mount,—
The air’s swept by my pinions!”

N. R. T.

THE DYING CHILD TO ITS MOTHER

(*" Oh! vous aurez trop dit."*)

Ан, you said too often to your angel
There are other angels in the sky —
There, where nothing changes, nothing suffers,
Sweet it were to enter in on high.

To that dome on marvellous pilasters,
To that tent roofed o'er with coloured bars,
That blue garden full of stars like lilies.
And of lilies beautiful as stars.

And you said it was a place most joyous,
All our poor imaginings above,
With the wingéd cherubim for playmates,
And the good God evermore to love.

Sweet it were to dwell there in all seasons,
Like a taper burning day and night,
Near to the child Jesus and the Virgin,
In that home so beautiful and bright.

But you should have told him, hapless mother,
Told your child so frail and gentle too,
That you were all his in life's beginning,
But that also he belonged to you.

For the mother watches o'er the infant,
He must rise up in her latter days,
She will need the man that was her baby
To stand by her when her strength decays.

Ah, you did not tell enough your darling
 That God made us in this lower life,
 Woman for the man, and man for woman,
 In our pains, our pleasures and our strife.

So that one sad day, O loss, O sorrow!
 The sweet creature left you all alone;
 'Twas your own hand hung the cage door open,
 Mother, and your pretty bird is flown.

BP. ALEXANDER.

EPITAPH

(*" Il vivait, il jouait."*)

HE lived and ever played, the tender smiling thing.
 What need, O Earth, to have plucked this flower from blossoming?
 Hadst thou not then the birds with rainbow-colours bright,
 The stars and the great woods, the wan wave, the blue sky?
 What need to have rapt this child from her thou hadst
 placed him by —
 Beneath those other flowers to have hid this flower from sight?

Because of this one child thou hast no more of might,
 O star-girt Earth, his death yields thee not higher delight!
 But, ah! the mother's heart with woe for ever wild,
 This heart whose sovran bliss brought forth such bitter
 birth —

This world as vast as thou, even *thou*, O sorrowless Earth,
 Is desolate and void because of this one child!

N. R. T.

ST. JOHN

(“ *Un jour, le morne esprit.*”)

ONE day, the sombre soul, the Prophet most sublime
At Patmos who aye dreamed,
And tremblingly perused, without the vast of Time,
Words that with hell-fire gleamed,

Said to his eagle: “ Bird, spread wings for loftiest flight —
Needs must I see His Face!”
The Eagle soared. At length, far beyond day and night,
Lo! the all-sacred Place!

And John beheld the Way whereof no angel knows
The name, nor there hath trod;
And, lo! the Place fulfilled with shadow that aye glows
Because of very God.

N. R. T.

THE POET'S SIMPLE FAITH

You say, “ Where goest thou? ” I cannot tell,
And still go on. If but the way be straight,
It cannot go amiss! before me lies
Dawn and the Day; the Night behind me; that
Suffices me; I break the bounds; I *see*,
And nothing more; *believe*, and nothing less.
My future is not one of my concerns.

EDW. DOWDEN.

LA LEGENDE DES SIECLES.—1859

CONSCIENCE

(*“ Lorsque avec ses enfants Caïn se fût enfui.”*)

THEN, with his children, clothed in skins of brutes,
Dishevelled, livid, rushing through the storm,
Cain fled before Jehovah. As night fell
The dark man reached a mount in a great plain,
And his tired wife and his sons, out of breath,
Said: “Let us lie down on the earth and sleep.”
Cain, sleeping not, dreamed at the mountain foot.
Raising his head, in that funereal heaven
He saw an eye, a great eye, in the night
Open, and staring at him in the gloom.
“I am too near,” he said, and tremblingly woke up
His sleeping sons again, and his tired wife,
And fled through space and darkness. **Thirty days**
He went, and thirty nights, nor looked behind;
Pale, silent, watchful, shaking at each sound;
No rest, no sleep, till he attained the strand
Where the sea washes that which since was Asshur.
“Here pause,” he said, “for this place is secure;
Here may we rest, for this is the world’s end.”
And he sat down; when, lo! in the sad sky,
The self-same Eye on the horizon’s verge,
And the wretch shook as in an ague fit.
“Hide me!” he cried; and all his watchful sons,

Their finger on their lip, stared at their sire.
 Cain said to Jabal (father of them that dwell
 In tents): "Spread here the curtain of thy tent."
 And they spread wide the floating canvas roof,
 And made it fast and fixed it down with lead.
 "You see nought now," said Zillah then, fair child,
 The daughter of his eldest, sweet as day.
 But Cain replied, "That Eye — I see it still."
 And Jubal cried (the father of all those
 That handle harp and organ): "I will build
 A sanctuary;" and he made a wall of bronze,
 And set his sire behind it. But Cain moaned,
 "That Eye is glaring at me ever." Henoah cried:
 "Then must we make a circle vast of towers,
 So terrible that nothing dare draw near;
 Build we a city with a citadel;
 Build we a city high and close it fast."
 Then Tubal Cain (instructor of all them
 That work in brass and iron) built a tower —
 Enormous, superhuman. While he wrought,
 His fiery brothers from the plain around
 Hunted the sons of Enoch and of Seth;
 They plucked the eyes out of whoever passed,
 And hurled at even arrows to the stars.
 They set strong granite for the canvas wall,
 And every block was clamped with iron chains.
 It seemed a city made for hell. Its towers,
 With their huge masses made night in the land.
 The walls were thick as mountains. On the door
 They graved: "Let not God enter here." This done,
 And having finished to cement and build
 In a stone tower, they set him in the midst.
 To him, still dark and haggard, "Oh, my sire,
 Is the Eye gone?" quoth Zillah tremblingly.
 But Cain replied: "Nay, it is even there."
 Then added: "I will live beneath the earth,
 As a lone man within his sepulchre.

I will see nothing; will be seen of none."
 They digged a trench, and Cain said: "'Tis enow,"
 As he went down alone into the vault;
 But when he sat, so ghost-like, in his chair,
 And they had closed the dungeon o'er his head,
 The Eye was in the tomb and fixed on Cain.
Dublin University Magazine.

THE LIONS

(*"Les lions dans la fosse étaient sans nourriture."*)

FAMISHED the lions were in their strong den,
 And roared appeal to Nature from the men
 Who caged them — Nature that for them had care.
 Kept for three days without their needful fare
 The creatures raved with hunger and with hate,
 And through their roof of chains and iron grate
 Looked to the blood-red sunset in the west;
 Their cries the distant traveller oppress'd
 Far as horizon which the blue hill veils.

Fiercely they lashed their bodies with their tails
 Till the walls shook; as if their eyes' red light
 And hungry jaws had lent them added might.

By Og and his great sons was shaped the cave,
 They hollowed it, in need, themselves to save,
 It was a deep-laid place wherein to hide
 This giant's palace in the rock's dark side;
 Their heads had broken through the roof of stone,
 So that the light in every corner shone,
 And dreary dungeon had for dome blue sky.
 Nebuchadnezzar, savage king, had eye
 For this strong cavern, and a pavement laid

Upon the centre, that it should be made
 A place where lions he could safely mew,
 Though once Deucalions and Khans it knew.

The beasts were four most furious all. The ground
 Was carpeted with bones that lay all round,
 While as they walked, and crunched with heavy tread
 Men's skeletons and brutes', far overhead
 The tapering shadows of the rocks were spread.

The first had come from Sodom's desert plain;
 When savage freedom did to him remain
 He dwelt at Sin, extremest point and rude
 Of silence terrible and solitude.
 Oh! woe betide who fell beneath his claw,
 This Lion of the sand with rough-skinned paw.

The second came from forest water'd by
 The stream Euphrates; when his step drew nigh,
 Descending to the river, all things feared,
 Hard fight to snare this growler it appeared.
 The hounds of two kings were employed to catch
 This Lion of the Woods and be his match.

The third one dwelt on the steep mountain's side,
 Horror and gloom companion'd every stride:
 When towards the miry ravines they would stray,
 And herds and flocks in their wild gambols play,
 All fled — the shepherd, warrior, priest — in fright
 If he leaped forth in all his dreadful might.

The fourth tremendous, furious creature came
 From the sea shore, and prowled with leonine fame,
 Before he knew captivity's hard throes,
 Along the coast where Gur's strong city rose.
 Reeking its roofs — and in its ports were met
 The masts of many nations thickly set.

There peasants brought their manna fine, and gum,
And there the prophet on his ass would come;
And folks were happy as caged birds set free.
Gur had a market-place 'twas grand to see;
There Abyssinians brought their ivories rare,
And Amorrhians amber for their ware,
And linens dark. From Asser came fine wheat.
And from famed Ascalon the butter sweet.
The fleet of vessels stir on ocean made.
This beast in reverie of evening's shade
Was fretted by the noisy town so near,
Too many folks lived in it, that was clear.
Gur was a lofty, formidable town;
At night three heavy barriers made it frown
And closed the entrance inaccessible.
Between each battlement rose terrible
Rhinoceros horn, or one of buffalo;
The strong, straight wall did like a hero show.
Some fifteen fathoms deep the moat might be,
And it was filled by sluices from the sea.
Instead of kennel'd watch-dogs barking near,
Two monstrous dragons did for guards appear —
They had been captured 'mong the reeds of Nile,
And by magician tamed to guards servile.
One night the gate thus kept the lion neared,
With single bound the guarding moat he cleared;
Then with barbaric teeth the gate he smashed
And all its triple bars; and next he crashed
The dragons twain, without so much as look
At them, and bolts and hinges all he shook
Into one wreck. And when he made his way
Back towards the strand, remained there of the fray
Only a vision of the peopled town,
Only a memory of the wall knocked down,
'Neath spectral towers fit but for vulture's nest,
Or for the tiger wanting timely rest.
This Lion scorned complaint, but crouching lay

And yawned, so heavily time passed away.
 Master'd by man sharp hunger thus he bore,
 Yet weariness of woe oppressed him sore.

But to and fro the others stamp all three,
 And if a fluttering bird outside they see,
 They gnaw its shadow as they mark it soar,
 Their hunger growing as they hoarsely roar.

In a dark corner of the cavern dim
 Quite suddenly there ope'd a portal grim,
 And pushed by brawny arms that fright betrayed
 Appeared a man in grave clothes white arrayed.

The grating closed as closing up a tomb;
 The Man was with the Lions in the gloom.
 The monsters foamed, and rushed their prey to gain,
 With frightful yell, while bristled every mane,
 Their howling roar expressing keenest hate
 Of savage nature rebel to its fate
 With anger dashed by fear. Then spoke the Man,
 And stretching forth his hand his words thus ran,
 "May peace be with you Lions." Paused the beasts.

The wolves that disinter the dead for feasts,
 The flat skulled bears, and writhing jackals, they
 Who prowl at shipwrecks on the rocks for prey,
 Are fierce; hyenas are unpitying found,
 And watchful tiger felling at one bound.
 But the strong lion in his stately force
 Will sometimes lift the paw, yet stay its course.
 He the lone dreamer in the shadows grey.
 And now the Lions grouped themselves; and they
 Amid the ruins looked like elders set
 On grave discussion, in a conclave met,
 With knitted brows intent disputes to end,
 While over them a dead tree's branches bend.

First spoke the Lion of the sandy plain
And said, "When this man entered I again
Beheld the mid-day sun, and felt the blast
Of the hot simoom blown o'er spaces vast.
Oh, this man from the desert comes, I see!"

Then spoke the Lion of the woods: "For me,
One time where fig and palm and cedars grow
And holly, day and night came music's flow
To fill my joyous cave; even when still
All life, the foliage round me seemed to thrill
With song. When this man spoke a sound was made
Like that from birds' nests in the mossy shade.
This man has journey'd from my forest home!"

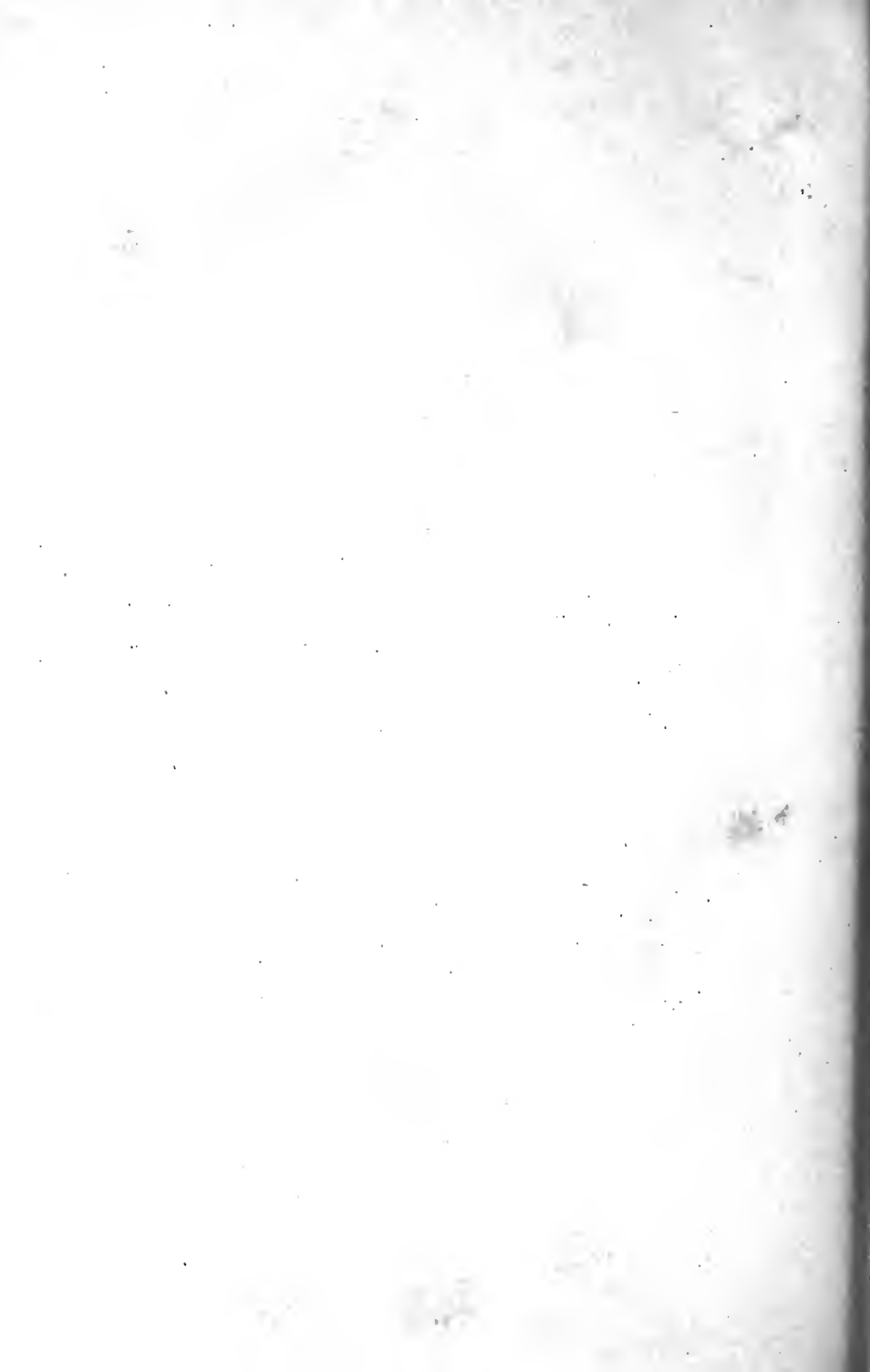
And now the one which had the nearest come,
The Lion black from mountains huge exclaimed:
"This man is like a Caucasus, far famed,
Where no rock stirs; the majesty has he
Of Atlas. When his arm he raised all free
I thought that Lebanon had made a bound,
And thrown its shadow vast on fields around.
This man comes to us from the mountain side!"

The Lion dweller near the ocean wide,
Whose roar was loud as roar of frothing sea,
Spoke last. "My sons, my habit is," said he,
"In sight of grandeur wholly to ignore
All enmity; and this is why the shore
Became my home; I watched the sun arise
And moon, and the grave smile of dawn; mine eyes
Grew used to the sublime — while waves rolled by
I learn'd great lessons of eternity.
Now, how this man is named I do not know,
But in his eyes I see the heavens glow;
This man, with brow so calm, by God is sent."



"In the dim depth stood Daniel calm of mien,
With eyes uplifted to the stars serene,
While this the sight for wondering gaze to meet,
The Lions fawning at the Captive's feet,"

Poems: The Lions. Page 187.



When night had darken'd the blue firmament,
 The keeper wished to see inside the gate,
 And pressed his pale face 'gainst the fasten'd grate.
 In the dim depth stood Daniel calm of mien,
 With eyes uplifted to the stars serene,
 While this the sight for wondering gaze to meet,
 The Lions fawning at the Captive's feet!

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

BOAZ ASLEEP

(*"Booz s'était couché."*)

At work within his barn since very early,
 Fairly tired out with toiling all the day,
 Upon the small bed where he always lay
 Boaz was sleeping by his sacks of barley.

Barley and wheat-fields he possessed, and well,
 Though rich, loved justice; wherefore all the flood
 That turned his mill-wheels was unstained with mud
 And in his smithy blazed no fire of hell.

His beard was silver, as in April all
 A stream may be; he did not grudge a stook.
 When the poor gleaner passed, with kindly look,
 Quoth he, "Of purpose let some handfuls fall."

He walked his way of life straight on the plain,
 With justice clothed, like linen white and clean,
 And ever rustling towards the poor, I ween,
 Like public fountains ran his sacks of grain.

Good master, faithful friend, in his estate
 Frugal yet generous, beyond the youth
 He won regard of women, for in sooth
 The young man may be fair — the old man's great.

Life's primal source, unchangeable and bright,
 The old man entereth, the day eterne;
 And in the young man's eye a flame may burn,
 But in the old man's eye one seeth light.

As Jacob slept, or Judith, so full deep
 Slept Boaz 'neath the leaves. Now it betided,
 Heaven's gate being partly open, that there glided
 A fair dream forth, and hovered o'er his sleep.

And in his dream to heaven, the blue and broad,
 Right from his loins an oak tree grew amain.
 His race ran up it far, like a long chain;
 Below it sung a king, above it died a God.

Whereupon Boaz murmured in his heart,
 "The number of my years is past fourscore:
 How may this be? I have not any more,
 Or son, or wife; yea, she who had her part

"In this my couch, O Lord! is now in Thine;
 And she, half living, I half dead within,
 Our beings still commingle and are twin,
 It cannot be that I should found a line!

"Youth hath triumphal mornings; its days bound
 From night, as from a victory. But such
 A trembling as the birch-tree's to the touch
 Of winter is an eld, and evening closes round.

"I bow myself to death, as kine to meet
 The water bow their fronts athirst." He said.
 The cedar feeleth not the rose's head,
 Nor he the woman's presence at his feet!

For while he slept, the Moabiteess Ruth
 Lay at his feet, expectant of his waking.
 He knowing not what sweet guile she was making;
 She knowing not what God would have in sooth.

Asphodel scents did Gilgal's breezes bring —
 Through nuptial shadows, questionless, full fast
 The angels sped, for momentarily there passed
 A something blue which seemed to be a wing.

Silent was all in Jezreel and Ur —
 The stars were glittering in the heaven's dusk meadows.
 Far west among those flowers of the shadows,
 The thin clear crescent lustrous over her,

Made Ruth raise question, looking through the bars
 Of heaven, with eyes half-oped, what God, what comer
 Unto the harvest of the eternal summer,
 Had flung his golden hook down on the field of stars.

BP. ALEXANDER.

THE PARRICIDE

(*"Il mourut, on le mit dans un cercueil."*)

KING Canute died.¹ Encoffined he was laid.
 Of Aarhus came the Bishop prayers to say,
 And sang a hymn upon his tomb, and held
 That Canute was a saint — Canute the Great,
 That from his memory breathed celestial perfume,
 And that they saw him, they the priests, in glory,
 Seated at God's right hand, a prophet crowned.

Evening came,
 And hushed the organ in the holy place,
 And the priests, issuing from the temple doors,
 Left the dead king in peace. Then he arose,
 Opened his gloomy eyes, and grasped his sword,
 And went forth loftily. The massy walls
 Yielded before the phantom, like a mist.

¹ King Canute slew his old father, Sweno, to obtain the crown.

There is a sea where Aarhuus, Altona,
And Elsinore's vast domes and shadowy towers
Glass in deep waters. Over this he went
Dark, and still Darkness listened for his foot
Inaudible, itself being but a dream.
Straight to Mount Savo went he, gnawed by time,
And thus, "O mountain buffeted of storms,
Give me of thy huge mantle of deep snow
To frame a winding-sheet." The mountain knew him,
Nor dared refuse, and with his sword Canute
Cut from its flank white snow, enough to make
The garment he desired, and then he cried,
"Old mountain! death is dumb, but tell me thou
The way to God." More deep each dread ravine
And hideous hollow yawned, and sadly thus
Answered that hoar associate of the clouds:
Spectre, I know not, I am always here."
Canute departed, and with head erect,
All white and ghastly in his robe of snow,
Went forth into great silence and great night
By Iceland and Norway. After him
Gloom swallowed up the universe. He stood
A sovran kingdomless, a lonely ghost
Confronted with Immensity. He saw
The awful Infinite, at whose portal pale
Lightning sinks dying; Darkness, skeleton
Whose joints are nights, and utter Formlessness
Moving confusedly in the horrible dark

Inscrutable and blind. No star was there,
Yet something like a haggard gleam; no sound
But the dull tide of Darkness, and her dumb
And fearful shudder. "'Tis the tomb," he said,
"God is beyond!" Three steps he took, then cried:
'Twas deathly as the grave, and not a voice
Responded, nor came any breath to sway
The snowy mantle, with unsullied white

Emboldening the spectral wanderer.
 Sudden he marked how, like a gloomy star,
 A spot grew broad upon his livid robe;
 Slowly it widened, raying darkness forth;
 And Canute proved it with his spectral hands:
 It was a drop of blood.

R. GARNETT.

But he saw nothing; space was black — no sound.
 “Forward,” said Canute, raising his proud head.
 There fell a second stain beside the first,
 Then it grew larger, and the Cimbrian chief
 Stared at the thick vague darkness, and saw nought.
 Still as a bloodhound follows on his track,
 Sad he went on. There fell a third red stain
 On the white winding-sheet. He had never fled;
 Howbeit Canute forward went no more,
 But turned on that side where the sword arm hangs.
 A drop of blood, as if athwart a dream,
 Fell on the shroud, and reddened his right hand.
 Then, as in reading one turns back a page,
 A second time he changed his course, and turned
 To the dim left. There fell a drop of blood.
 Canute drew back, trembling to be alone,
 And wished he had not left his burial couch.
 But, when a blood-drop fell again, he stopped,
 Stooped his pale head, and tried to make a prayer.
 Then fell a drop, and the prayer died away
 In savage terror. Darkly he moved on,
 A hideous spectre hesitating, white,
 And ever as he went, a drop of blood
 Implacably from the darkness broke away
 And stained that awful whiteness. He beheld
 Shaking, as doth a poplar in the wind,
 Those stains grow darker and more numerous:
 Another, and another, and another.
 They seem to light up that funereal gloom,

And mingling in the folds of that white sheet,
 Make it a cloud of blood. He went, and went,
 And still from that unfathomable vault
 The red blood dropped upon him drop by drop,
 Always, for ever — without noise, as though
 From the black feet of some night-gibbeted corpse.
 Alas! Who wept those formidable tears?
 The Infinite! — Toward Heaven, of the good
 Attainable, through the wild sea of night,
 That hath not ebb nor flow, Canute went on,
 And ever walking, came to a closed door,
 That from beneath showed a mysterious light.
 Then he looked down upon his winding-sheet,
 For that was the great place, the sacred place,
 That was a portion of the light of God,
 And from behind that door Hosannas rang.
 The winding-sheet was red, and Canute stopped.
 This is why Canute from the light of day
 Draws ever back, and hath not dared appear
 Before the Judge whose face is as the sun.
 This is why still remaineth the dark king
 Out in the night, and never having power
 To bring his robe back to its first pure state,
 But feeling at each step a blood-drop fall,
 Wanders eternally 'neath the vast black heaven.

Dublin University Magazine.

THE BOY-KING'S PRAYER

(FROM "LE PETIT ROI DE GALICE.")

(" *Le cheval galopait toujours.*")

THE good steed flew o'er river and o'er plain,
 Till far away,—no need of spur or rein.
 The child, half rapture, half solicitude,

Looks back anon, in fear to be pursued;
Shakes lest some raging brother of his sire
Leap from those rocks that o'er the path aspire.

On the rough granite bridge, at evening's fall,
The white horse paused by Compostella's wall,
('Twas good St. James that reared those arches tall,)
Through the dim mist stood out each belfry dome,
And the boy hailed the paradise of home.

Close to the bridge, set on high stage, they meet
A Christ of stone, the Virgin at his feet.
A taper lighted that dear pardoning face,
More tender in the shade that wrapped the place,
And the child stayed his horse, and in the shine
Of the wax taper knelt down at the shrine.

"O, my good God! O, Mother Maiden sweet!"
He said, "I was the worm beneath men's feet;
My father's brethren held me in their thrall,
But Thou didst send the Paladin of Gaul,
O Lord! and show'dst what different spirits move
The good men and the evil; those who love
And those who love not. I had been as they,
But Thou, O God! hast saved both life and soul to-day.
I saw Thee in that noble knight; I saw
Pure light, true faith, and honour's sacred law,
My Father,—and I learnt that monarchs must
Compassionate the weak, and unto all be just.
O Lady Mother! O dear Jesus! thus
Bowed at the cross where Thou didst bleed for us,
I swear to hold the truth that now I learn,
Leal to the loyal, to the traitor stern,
'And ever just and nobly mild to be,
Meet scholar of that Prince of Chivalry;
And here Thy shrine bear witness, Lord, for me."

The horse of Roland, hearing the boy tell
 His vow, looked round and spoke: "O King, 'tis well!"
 Then on the charger mounted the child-king,
 And rode into the town, while all the bells 'gan ring.

Dublin University Magazine.

EVIRADNUS

THE KNIGHT ERRANT.

(" *Qu'est-ce que Sigismond et Ladislás ont dit?* ")

I.

THE ADVENTURER SETS OUT.

WHAT was it Sigismond and Ladislás said?

I know not if the rock, or tree o'erhead,
 Had heard their speech; — but when the two spake low,
 Among the trees, a shudder seemed to go
 Through all their branches, just as if that way
 A beast had passed to trouble and dismay.
 Darker the shadow of the rock was seen,
 And then a morsel of the shade, between
 The sombre trees, took shape as it would seem
 Some spectre walking in the sunset's gleam.

'Tis not a monster rising from its lair,
 Nor phantom of the foliage and the air,
 'Tis not a morsel of the granite's shade
 That walks in deepest hollows of the glade.
 'Tis not a vampire nor a spectre pale,
 But living man in rugged coat of mail.
 It is Alsatia's noble Chevalier,
 Eviradnus the brave, that now is here.

The men who spoke he recognized the while
 He rested in the thicket; words of guile
 Most horrible were theirs as they passed on,
 And to the ears of Eviradnus one —
 One word had come which roused him. Well he knew
 The land which lately he had journeyed through.

He down the valley went unto the inn
 Where he had left his horse and page, Gasclin.
 The horse had wanted drink, and lost a shoe;
 And now, "Be quick!" he said, "with what you do,
 For business calls me, I must not delay."
 He strides the saddle and he rides away.

II.

EVIRADNUS.

Eviradnus was growing old apace,
 The weight of years had left its hoary trace,
 But still of knights the most renowned was he,
 Model of bravery and purity.
 His blood he spared not; ready day or night
 To punish crime, his dauntless sword shone bright
 In his unblemished hand; holy and white
 And loyal all his noble life had been,
 A Christian Samson coming on the scene.
 With fist alone the gate he battered down
 Of Sickingen in flames, and saved the town.
 'Twas he, indignant at the honour paid
 To crime, who with his heel an onslaught made
 Upon Duke Lupus' shameful monument,
 Tore down the statue he to fragments rent;
 Then column of the Strasburg monster bore
 To bridge of Wasselonne, and threw it o'er
 Into the waters deep. The people round
 Blazon the noble deeds that so abound

From Altorf unto Chaux-de-Fonds, and say,
When he rests musing in a dreamy way,
"Behold, 'tis Charlemagne!" Tawny to see
And hairy, and seven feet high was he,
Like John of Bourbon. Roaming hill or wood
He looked a wolf endeavouring to do good.
Bound up in duty, he of nought complained,
The cry for help his aid at once obtained.
Only he mourned the baseness of mankind,
And — that the beds too short he e'er must find.
When people suffer under cruel kings,
With pity moved, he to them succour brings.
'Twas he defended Alix from her foes
As sword of Urraca — he ever shows
His strength is for the feeble and oppressed;
Father of orphans he, and all distressed!
Kings of the Rhine in strongholds were by him
Boldly attacked, and tyrant barons grim.
He freed the towns — defying in his lair
Hugo The Eagle; boldly did he dare
To break the collar of Saverne, the ring
Of Colmar, and the iron torture-thing
Of Schlestadt, and the chain that Haguenau bore.
Confront with evil he an aspect wore
Good but most terrible. In the dread scale
Which princes weighted with their horrid tale
Of craft and violence, and blood and ill,
And fire and shocking deeds, his sword was still
God's counterpoise displayed. Ever alert
More evil from the wretched to avert,
Those hapless ones who 'neath Heaven's vault at night
Raise suppliant hands. His lance loved not the plight
Of mouldering in the rack, of no avail,
His battle-axe slipped from supporting nail
Quite easily; 'twas ill for action base
To come so near that he the thing could trace.
The steel-clad champion death drops all around

As glaciers water. Hero ever found
 Eviradnus is kinsman of the race
 Of Amadys of Gaul, and knights of Thrace.
 He smiles at age. For he who never asked
 For quarter from mankind — shall he be tasked
 To beg of Time for mercy? Rather he
 Would girdle up his loins, like Baldwin be.
 Aged he is, but of a lineage rare;
 The least intrepid of the birds that dare
 Is not the eagle barbed. What matters age,
 The years but fire him with a holy rage.
 Though late from Palestine, he is not spent,—
 With age he wrestles, firm in his intent.

III.

IN THE FOREST.

If in the wood a traveller there had been
 That eve, had lost himself, strange sight he'd seen.
 Quite in the forest's heart a lighted space
 Arose to view; in that deserted place
 A lone, abandoned hall with light aglow
 The long neglect of centuries did show.
 The castle-towers of Corbus in decay
 Were girt by weeds and growths that had their way;
 Couch-grass and ivy, and wild eglantine
 In subtle scaling warfare all combine.
 Subject to such attacks three hundred years,
 The donjon yields, and ruin now appears.
 E'en as by leprosy the wild boars die,
 In moat the crumbled battlements now lie;
 Around the snake-like bramble twists its rings;
 Freebooter sparrows come on daring wings
 To perch upon the swivel-gun, nor heed
 Its murmuring growl when pecking in their greed
 The mulberries ripe. With insolence the thorn

Thrives on the desolation so forlorn.
But winter brings revenges; then the Keep
Wakes all vindictive from its seeming sleep,
Hurls down the heavy rain, night after night,
Thanking the season's all-resistless might;
And, when the gutters choke, its gargoyles four
From granite mouths in anger spit and pour
Upon the hated ivy hour by hour.

As to the sword rust is, so lichens are
To towering citadel with which they war.
Alas! for Corbus — dreary, desolate,
And yet its woes the winters mitigate.
It rears itself among convulsive throes
That shake its ruins when the tempest blows.
Winter, the savage warrior, pleases well,
With its storm clouds, the mighty citadel,—
Restoring it to life. The lightning flash
Strikes like a thief and flies; the winds that crash
Sound like a clarion, for the Tempest bluff
Is Battle's sister. And when wild and rough,
The north wind blows, the tower exultant cries
“Behold me!” When hail-hurling gales arise
Of blustering Equinox, to fan the strife,
It stands erect, with martial ardour rife,
A joyous soldier! When like yelping hound
Pursued by wolves, November comes to bound
In joy from rock to rock, like answering cheer
To howling January now so near —
“Come on!” the Donjon cries to blasts o'erhead —
It has seen Attila, and knows not dread.
Oh, dismal nights of contest in the rain
And mist, that furious would the battle gain,
The tower braves all, though angry skies pour fast
The flowing torrents, river-like and vast.
From their eight pinnacles the gorgons bay
And scattered monsters, in their stony way,

Are growling heard; the rampart lions gnaw
The misty air and slush with granite maw,
The sleet upon the griffins spits, and all
The Saurian monsters, answering to the squall,
Flap wings; while through the broken ceiling fall
Torrents of rain upon the forms beneath,
Dragons and snak'd Medusas gnashing teeth
In the dismantled rooms. Like armoured knight
The granite Castle fights with all its might,
Resisting through the winter. All in vain,
The heaven's bluster, January's rain,
And those dread elemental powers we call
The Infinite — the whirlwinds that appal —
Thunder and waterspouts; and winds that shake
As 'twere a tree its ripened fruit to take.
The winds grow wearied, warring with the tower,
The noisy North is out of breath, nor power
Has any blast old Corbus to defeat,
It still has strength their onslaughts worst to meet.
Thus, spite of briars and thistles, the old tower
Remains triumphant through the darkest hour;
Superb as pontiff, in the forest shown,
Its rows of battlements make triple crown;
At eve, its silhouette is finely traced
Immense and black — showing the Keep is placed
On rocky throne, sublime and high; east, west,
And north and south, at corners four, there rest
Four mounts; Aptar, where flourishes the pine,
And Toxis, where the elms grow green and fine;
Crobius and Bleyda, giants in their might,
Against the stormy winds to stand and fight,
And these above its diadem uphold
Night's living canopy of clouds unrolled.

The herdsman fears, and thinks its shadow creeps
To follow him; and superstition keeps
Such hold that Corbus as a terror reigns;

Folks say the Fort a target still remains
For the Black Archer — and that it contains
The cave where the Great Sleeper still sleeps sound.
The country people all the castle round
Are frightened easily, for legends grow
And mix with phantoms of the mind; we know
The hearth is cradle of such fantasies,
And in the smoke the cotter sees arise
From low-thatched hut he traces cause of dread.
Thus rendering thanks that he is lowly bred,
Because from such none look for valorous deeds,
The peasant flies the Tower, although it leads
A noble knight to seek adventure there,
And, from his point of honour, dangers dare.

Thus very rarely passer-by is seen;
But — it might be with twenty years between,
Or haply less — at unfixed interval
There would a semblance be of festival.
A Seneschal and usher would appear,
And troops of servants many baskets bear.
Then were, in mystery, preparations made,
And they departed — for till night none stayed.
But 'twixt the branches gazers could descry
The blackened hall lit up most brilliantly.
None dared approach — and this the reason why.

IV.

THE CUSTOM OF LUSACE.

When died a noble Marquis of Lusace
'Twas custom for the heir who filled his place
Before assuming princely pomp and power
To sup one night in Corbus' olden tower.
From this weird meal he passed to the degree
Of Prince and Margrave; nor could ever he

Be thought brave knight, or she — if woman claim
 The rank — be reckoned of unblemished fame
 Till they had breathed the air of ages gone,
 The funeral odours, in the nest alone
 Of its dead masters. Ancient was the race;
 To climb the upward stem of proud Lusace
 Gives one a vertigo; descended they
 From ancestor of Attila, men say;
 Their race to him — through Pagans — they trace back;
 Becoming Christians, they their line could track
 Through Lechus, Plato, Otho to combine
 With Ursus, Stephen, in a lordly line.
 Of all those masters of the country round
 That were on Northern Europe's boundary found —
 At first were waves, and then the dykes were reared —
 Corbus in double majesty appeared,
 Castle on hill and town upon the plain;
 And one who mounted on the tower could gain
 A view beyond the pines and rocks, of spires
 That pierce the shade the distant scene acquires;
 A walled town is it, but 'tis not ally
 Of the old citadel's proud majesty;
 Unto itself belonging this remained.
 Often a castle was thus self-sustained
 And equalled towns; witness in Lombardy
 Crama, and Prato in fair Tuscany,
 And in Apulia Barletta too; — each one
 Was powerful as a town, and dreaded none.
 Corbus ranked thus; its precincts seemed to hold
 The reflex of its mighty kings of old;
 Their great events had witness in these walls,
 Their marriages were here and funerals,
 And mostly here it was that they were born;
 And here crowned Barons ruled with pride and scorn;
 Cradle of Scythian majesty this place.
 Now each new master of this ancient race
 A duty owed to ancestors which he

Was bound to carry on. The law's decree
It was that he should pass alone the night
Which made him king, as in their solemn sight.
Just at the forest's edge a clerk was met
With wine in sacred cup and purpose set,
A wine mysterious, which the heir must drink
To cause deep slumber till the day's soft brink.
Then to the castle tower he wends his way,
And finds a supper laid with rich display.
He sups and sleeps: when to his slumbering eyes
The shades of kings from Bela all arise.
None dare the tower to enter on this night,
But when the morning dawns, crowds are in sight
The dreamer to deliver,— whom half dazed,
And with the visions of the night amazed,
They to the old church take, where rests the dust
Of Borivorus; then the bishop must,
With fervent blessings on his eyes and mouth,
Put in his hands the stony hatchets both,
With which — even like death impartially —
Struck Attila, with one arm dexterously
The south, and with the other arm the north.

This day the town the threatening flag set forth
Of Marquis Swantibore, the monster he
Who in the wood tied up his wife, to be
Devoured by wolves, together with the bull
Of which with jealousy his heart was full.

Even when woman took the place of heir
The tower of Corbus claimed the supper there;
'Twas law — the woman trembled, but must dare.

v.

THE MARCHIONESS MAHAUD.

Niece of the Marquis — John the Striker named —
Mahaud to-day the marquise has claimed.

A noble dame — the crown is hers by right:
As woman she has graces that delight.
A queen devoid of beauty is not queen,
She needs the royalty of beauty's mien;
God in His harmony has equal ends
For cedar that resists, and reed that bends,
And good it is a woman sometimes rules,
Holds in her hand the power, and manners schools,
And laws and mind; — succeeding master proud,
With gentle voice and smile she leads the crowd,
The sombre human troop. But sweet Mahaud
On evil days had fallen; gentle, good,
Alas! she held the sceptre like a flower;
Timid yet gay, imprudent for the hour,
And careless too. With Europe all in throes,
Though twenty years she now already knows,
She has refused to marry, although oft
Entreated. It is time an arm less soft
Than hers — a manly arm — supported her;
Like to the rainbow she, one might aver,
Shining on high between the cloud and rain,
Or like the ewe that gambols on the plain
Between the bear and tiger; innocent,
She has two neighbours of most foul intent:
For foes the Beauty has, in life's pure spring,
The German Emperor and the Polish King.

VI.

THE TWO NEIGHBOURS.

The difference this betwixt the evil pair,
Faithless to God — for laws without a care —
One was the claw, the other one the will
Controlling. Yet to mass they both went still,
And on the rosary told their beads each day.
But none the less the world believed that they
Unto the powers of hell their souls had sold.

Even in whispers men each other told
The details of the pact which they had signed
With that dark power, the foe of human kind;
In whispers, for the crowd had mortal dread
Of them so high, and woes that they had spread.
One might be vengeance and the other hate,
Yet lived they side by side, in powerful state
And close alliance. All the people near
From red horizon dwelt in abject fear,
Mastered by them; their figures darkly grand
Had ruddy reflex from the wasted land,
And fires, and towns they sacked. Besides the one,
Like David, poet was, the other shone
As fine musician — rumour spread their fame,
Declaring them divine, until each name
In Italy's fine sonnets met with praise.
The ancient hierarch in those old days
Had custom strange, a now forgotten thing,
It was a European plan that King
Of France was marquis, and th' imperial head
Of Germany was duke; there was no need
To class the other kings, but barons they,
Obedient vassals unto Rome, their stay.
The King of Poland was but simple knight,
Yet now, for once, had strange unwonted right,
And, as exception to the common state,
This one Sarmatian King was held as great
As German Emperor; and each knew how
His evil part to play, nor mercy show.
The German had one aim, it was to take
All land he could, and it his own to make.
The Pole already having Baltic shore,
Seized Celtic ports, still needing more and more.
On all the Northern Sea his crafts roused fear:
Iceland beheld his demon navy near.
Antwerp the German burnt; and Prussias twain
Bowed to his yoke. The Polish King was fain

To help the Russian Spotocus — his aid
Was like the help that in their common trade
A sturdy butcher gives a weaker one.
The King it is who seizes, and this done,
The Emperor pillages, usurping right
In war Teutonic, settled but by might.
The King in Jutland cynic footing gains,
The weak coerced, the while with cunning pains
The strong are duped. But 'tis a law they make
That their accord themselves should never break.
From Arctic seas to cities Transalpine,
Their hideous talons, curved for sure rapine,
Scrape o'er and o'er the mournful continent,
Their plans succeed, and each is well content.
Thus under Satan's all paternal care
They brothers are, this royal bandit pair.
Oh, noxious conquerors! with transient rule
Chimera heads — ambition can but fool.
Their misty minds but harbour rottenness
Loathsome and fetid, and all barrenness —
Their deeds to ashes turn, and, hydra-bred,
The mystic skeleton is theirs to dread.
The daring German and the cunning Pole
Noted to-day a woman had control
Of lands, and watched Mahaud like evil spies;
And from the Emp'ror's cruel mouth — with dyes
Of wrath empurpled — came these words of late:
“The empire wearies of the wallet weight
Hung at its back — this High and Low Lusace,
Whose hateful load grows heavier apace,
That now a woman holds its ruler's place.”
Threatening, and blood suggesting, every word;
The watchful Pole was silent — but he heard.

Two monstrous dangers; but the heedless one
Babbles and smiles, and bids all care begone —
Likes lively speech — while all the poor she makes

To love her, and the taxes off she takes.
A life of dance and pleasure she has known —
A woman always; in her jewelled crown
It is the pearl she loves — not cutting gems,
For these can wound, and mark men's diadems.
She pays the hire of Homer's copyists,
And in the Courts of Love presiding, lists.

Quite recently unto her Court have come
Two men — unknown their names or native home,
Their rank or race; but one plays well the lute,
The other is a troubadour; both suit
The taste of Mahaud, when on summer eve,
'Neath opened windows, they obtain her leave
To sing upon the terrace, and relate
The charming tales that do with music mate.
In August the Moravians have their fête,
But it is radiant June in which Lusace
Must consecrate her noble Margrave race.
Thus in the weird and old ancestral tower
For Mahaud now has come the fateful hour,
The lonely supper which her state decrees.
What matters this to flowers, and birds, and trees,
And clouds and fountains? That the people may
Still bear their yoke — have kings to rule alway?
The water flows, the wind in passing by
In murmuring tones takes up the questioning cry.

VII.

THE BANQUET HALL.

The old stupendous hall has but one door,
And in the dusk it seems that more and more
The walls recede in space unlimited.
At the far end there is a table spread
That in the dreary void with splendour shines;
For ceiling we behold but rafter lines.

The table is arranged for one sole guest,
 A solitary chair doth near it rest,
 Throne-like, 'neath canopy that droopeth down
 From the black beams; upon the walls are shown
 The painted histories of the olden night,
 The Wendish King Thassilo's sturdy fight
 On land with Nimrod, and on ocean wide
 With Neptune. Rivers too personified
 Appear — the Rhine as by the Meuse betrayed,
 And fading groups of Odin in the shade,
 And the wolf Fenrir and the Asgard snake.
 One might the place for dragons' stable take.
 The only lights that in the shed appear
 Spring from the table's giant chandelier
 With seven iron branches — brought from hell
 By Attila Archangel, people tell,
 When he had conquered Mammon — and they say
 That seven souls were the first flames that day.
 This banquet hall looks an abyss outlined
 With shadowy vagueness, though indeed we find
 In the far depth upon the table spread
 A sudden, strong, and glaring light is shed,
 Striking upon the goldsmith's burnished works,
 And on the pheasants killed by traitor hawks.
 Loaded the table is with viands cold,
 Ewers and flagons, all enough of old
 To make a love feast. All the napery
 Was Friesland's famous make; and fair to see
 The dishes, silver-gilt and bordered round
 With flowers; for fruit, here strawberries were found
 And citrons, apples too, and nectarines.
 The wooden bowls were carved in cunning lines
 By peasants of the Murg, whose skilful hands
 With patient toil reclaim the barren lands
 And make their gardens flourish on a rock,
 Or mountain where we see the hunters flock.
 A golden cup, with handles Florentine,

Shows horned Acteons, armed and booted fine,
Who fight with sword in hand against the hounds.
Roses and gladioles make up bright mounds
Of flowers, with juniper and aniseed;
While sage, all newly cut for this great need,
Covers the Persian carpet that is spread
Beneath the table, and so helps to shed
Around a perfume of the balmy spring.
Beyond is desolation withering.
One hears within the hollow dreary space
Across the grove, made fresh by summer's grace,
The wind that ever is with mystic might
A spirit ripple of the Infinite.
The glass restored to frames to creak is made
By blustering wind that comes from neighbouring glade.
Strange, in this dream-like place, so drear and lone,
The guest expected was a living one!
The seven lights from seven arms make glow
Almost with life the staring eyes that show
On the dim frescoes — and along the walls
Is here and there a stool, or the light falls
O'er some long chest, with likeness to a tomb;
Yet were displayed amid the mournful gloom
Some copper vessels, and some crockery ware.
The door — as if it must, yet scarcely dare —
Had opened widely to the night's fresh air.

No voice is heard, for man has fled the place;
But Terror crouches in the corners' space.
And waits the coming guest. This banquet hall
Of Titans is so high, that he who shall
With wandering eye look up from beam to beam
Of the confused wild roof will haply seem
To wonder that the stars he sees not there.
Giants the spiders are, that weave with care
Their hideous webs, which float the joists amid,
Joists whose dark ends in griffins' jaws are hid.

The light is lurid, and the air like death,
 And dark and foul. Even Night holds its breath
 Awhile. One might suppose the door had fear
 To move its double leaves — their noise to hear.

VIII.

WHAT MORE WAS TO BE SEEN.

But the great hall of generations dead
 Has something more sepulchral and more dread
 Than lurid glare from seven-branched chandelier
 Or table lone with stately daïs near —
 Two rows of arches o'er a colonnade
 With knights on horseback all in mail arrayed,
 Each one disposed with pillar at his back
 And to another vis-à-vis. Nor lack
 The fittings all complete; in each right hand
 A lance is seen; the armoured horses stand
 With chamfrons laced, and harness buckled sure;
 The cuissarts' studs are by their clamps secure;
 The dirks stand out upon the saddle-bow;
 Even unto the horses' feet do flow
 Caparisons,— the leather all well clasped,
 The gorget and the spurs with bronze tongues hasped,
 The shining long sword from the saddle hung,
 The battle-axe across the back was flung.
 Under the arm a trusty dagger rests,
 Each spiked knee-piece its murderous power attests.
 Feet press the stirrups — hands on bridle shown
 Proclaim all ready, with the visors down,
 And yet they stir not, nor is audible
 A sound to make the sight less terrible.

Each monstrous horse a frontal horn doth bear,
 If e'er the Prince of Darkness herdsman were
 These cattle black were his by surest right,
 Like things but seen in horrid dreams of night.

The steeds are swathed in trappings manifold,
The arméd knights are grave, and stern, and cold,
Terrific too; the clench'd fists seem to hold
Some frightful missive, which the phantom hands
Would show, if opened out at Hell's commands.
The dusk exaggerates their giant size,
The shade is awed — the pillars coldly rise.
Oh, Night! why are these awful warriors here?

Horses and horsemen that make gazers fear
Are only empty armour. But erect
And haughty mien they all affect
And threatening air — though shades of iron still.
Are they strange larvæ — these their statues ill?
No. They are dreams of horror clothed in brass,
Which from profoundest depths of evil pass
With futile aim to dare the Infinite!
Souls tremble at the silent spectre sight,
As if in this mysterious cavalcade
They saw the weird and mystic halt was made
Of them who at the coming dawn of day
Would fade, and from their vision pass away.
A stranger looking in, these masks to see,
Might deem from Death some mandate there might be
At times to burst the tombs — the dead to wear
A human shape, and mustering ranks appear
Of phantoms, each confronting other shade.

Grave-clothes are not more grim and sombre made
Than are these helms; the deaf and sealed-up graves
Are not more icy than these arms; the staves
Of hideous biers have not their joints more strong
Than are the joinings of these legs; the long
Scaled gauntlet fingers look like worms that shine,
And battle robes to shroud-like folds incline.
The heads are skull-like, and the stony feet
Seem for the charnal house but only meet.
The pikes have death's-heads carved, and seem to be

Too heavy; but the shapes defiantly
 Sit proudly in the saddle — and perforce
 The rider looks united to the horse
 Upon whose flanks the mail and harness cross.
 The cap of Marquis beams near Ducal wreath,
 And on the helm and gleaming shield beneath
 Alternate triple pearls with leaves displayed
 Of parsley, and the royal robes are made
 So large that with the knightly hauberk they
 Seem to o'erspread the palfrey every way.
 To Rome the oldest armour might be traced,
 And men and horses' armour interlaced
 Blent horribly; the man and steed we feel
 Made but one hydra with its scales of steel.

Yet is there history here. Each coat of mail
 Is representant of some stirring tale.
 Each delta-shaped escutcheon shines to show
 A vision of the chief by it we know.
 Here are the blood-stained Dukes' and Marquis' line,
 Barbaric lords, who amid war's rapine
 Bore gilded saints upon their banners still
 Painted on fishes' skin with cunning skill.
 Here Geth, who to the Slaves cried "Onward go,"
 And Mundiaque and Ottocar — Plato
 And Ladislāus Kunne; and Welf who bore
 These words upon his shield his foes before:
 "Nothing there is I fear." Otho blear-eyed,
 Zultan and Nazamustus, and beside
 The later Spignus, e'en to Spartibor
 Of triple vision, and yet more and more
 As if a pause at every age were made,
 And Antæus' fearful dynasty portrayed.

What do they here so rigid and erect?
 What wait they for — and what do they expect?
 Blindness fills up the helm 'neath iron brows;
 Like sapless tree no soul the hero knows.

Darkness is now where eyes with flame were fraught,
And pierced visor serves for mask of nought.
Of empty void is spectral giant made,
And each of these all-powerful knights displayed
Is only rind of pride and murderous sin;
* Themselves are held the icy grave within.
Rust eats the casques enamoured once so much
Of death and daring — which knew kiss-like touch
Of banner — mistress so august and dear —
But not an arm can stir its hinges here;
Behold how mute are they whose threats were heard
Like savage roar — whose gnashing teeth and word
Deadened the clarion's tones; the helmets dread
Have not a sound, and all the armour spread,
The hauberks, that strong breathing seemed to sway,
Are stranded now in helplessness alway
To see the shadows, still prolonged, that seem
To take at night the image of a dream.

These two great files reach from the door afar
To where the table and the daïs are,
Leaving between their fronts a narrow lane.
On the left side the Marquises maintain
Their place, but the right side the Dukes retain,
And till the roof, embattled by Spignus,
But worn by time that even that subdues,
Shall fall upon their heads, these forms will stand
The grades confronting — one on either hand.
While in advance beyond, with haughty head —
As if commander of this squadron dread —
All waiting signal of the Judgment Day,
In stone was seen in olden sculptors' way
Charlemagne the King, who on the earth had found
Only twelve knights to grace his Table Round.

The crests were an assembly of strange things,
Of horrors such as nightmare only brings.
Asps, and spread eagles without beak or feet,

Sirens and mermaids here and dragons meet,
 And antlered stags and fabled unicorn,
 And fearful things of monstrous fancy born.
 Upon the rigid form of morion's sheen
 Winged lions and the Cerberus are seen,
 And serpents winged and finned; things made to fright
 The timid foe, alone by sense of sight.
 Some leaning forward and the others back,
 They looked a growing forest that did lack
 No form of terror; but these things of dread
 That once on barons' helms the battle led
 Beneath the giant banners, now are still,
 As if they gaped and found the time but ill,
 Wearied the ages passed so slowly by,
 And that the gory dead no more did lie
 Beneath their feet — pined for the battle-cry,
 The trumpet's clash, the carnage and the strife,
 Yawning to taste again their dreadful life.
 Like tears upon the palfreys' muzzles were
 The hard reflections of the metal there;
 From out these spectres, ages past exhumed,
 And as their shadows on the roof-beams loomed,
 Cast by the trembling light, each figure wan
 Seemed growing, and a monstrous shape to don,
 So that the double range of horrors made
 The darkened zenith clouds of blackest shade,
 That shaped themselves to profiles terrible.

All motionless the coursers horrible,
 That formed a legion lured by Death to war,
 These men and horses masked, how dread they are!
 Absorbed in shadows of the eternal shore,
 Among the living all their tasks are o'er.
 Silent, they seem all mystery to brave,
 These sphynxes whom no beacon light can save
 Upon the threshold of the gulf so near,
 As if they faced the great enigma here;

Ready with hoofs, between the pillars blue
 To strike out sparks, and combats to renew,
 Choosing for battle-field the shades below,
 Which they provoked by deeds we cannot know,
 In that dark realm thought dares not to expound
 False masks from heaven lowered to depths profound.

IX.

A NOISE ON THE FLOOR.

This is the scene on which now enters in
 Eviradnus; and follows page Gasclin.

The outer walls were almost all decayed,
 The door, for ancient Marquises once made —
 Raised many steps above the courtyard near —
 Commanded view of the horizon clear.
 The forest looked a great gulf all around,
 And on the rock of Corbus there were found
 Secret and blood-stained precipices tall.
 Duke Plato built the tower and banquet hall
 Over great pits,— so was it Rumour said.
 The flooring sounds 'neath Eviradnus' tread
 Above abysses many.

“Page,” said he,
 Come here, your eyes than mine can better see,
 For sight is woman-like and shuns the old;
 Ah! he can see enough, when years are told,
 Who backwards looks. But, boy, turn towards the glade
 And tell me what you see.”

The boy obeyed,
 And leaned across the threshold, while the bright,
 Full moon shed o'er the glade its white, pure light.
 “I see a horse and woman on it now,”
 Said Gasclin, “and companions also show.”
 “Who are they?” asked the seeker of sublime
 Adventures. “Sir, I now can hear like chime

The sound of voices, and men's voices too,
 Laughter and talk; two men there are in view,
 Across the road the shadows clear I mark
 Of horses three."

"Enough. Now, Gasclin, hark!"

Exclaimed the knight, "you must at once return
 By other path than that which you discern,
 So that you be not seen. At break of day
 Bring back our horses fresh, and every way
 Caparisoned; now leave me, boy, I say."
 The page looked at his master like a son,
 And said to him, "Oh, if I might stay on,
 For they are two."

"Go — I suffice alone!"

X.

EVIRADNUS MOTIONLESS.

And lone the hero is within the hall,
 And nears the table where the glasses all
 Show in profusion; all the vessels there,
 Goblets and glasses gilt, or painted fair,
 Are ranged for different wines with practised care.
 He thirsts; the flagons tempt; but there must stay
 One drop in emptied glass, and 'twould betray
 The fact that some one living had been here.
 Straight to the horses goes he, pauses near
 That which is next the table shining bright,
 Seizes the rider — plucks the phantom knight
 To pieces — all in vain its panoply
 And pallid shining to his practised eye;
 Then he conveys the severed iron remain
 To corner of the hall where darkness reigns;
 Against the wall he lays the armour low
 In dust and gloom like hero vanquished now —
 But keeping pond'rous lance and shield so old,
 Mounts to the empty saddle, and behold!

A statue Eviradnus has become,
Like to the others in their frigid home.
With visor down scarce breathing seemed maintained.
Throughout the hall a death-like silence reigned.

XI.

A LITTLE MUSIC.

Listen! like hum from unseen nests we hear
A mirthful buzz of voices coming near,
Of footsteps — laughter — from the trembling trees.
And now the thick-set forest all receives
A flood of moonlight — and there gently floats
The sound of a guitar of Innsbruck; notes
Which blend with chimes — vibrating to the hand —
Of tiny bell — where sounds a grain of sand.
A man's voice mixes with the melody,
And vaguely melts to song in harmony.

“If you like we'll dream a dream.
Let us mount on palfreys two;
Birds are singing,— let it seem
You lure me — and I take you.

“Let us start —'tis eve, you see,
I'm thy master and thy prey.
My bright steel shall pleasure be;
Yours, it shall be love, I say.

“Journeying leisurely we go,
We will make our steeds touch heads,
Kiss for fodder,— and we so
Satisfy our horses' needs.

“Come! the two delusive things
Stamp impatiently it seems,
Yours has heavenward soaring wings,
Mine is of the land of dreams.

- “What’s our baggage? only vows,
Happiness, and all our care.
And the flower that sweetly shows
Nestling lightly in your hair.
- “Come, the oaks all dark appear,
Twilight now will soon depart,
Railing sparrows laugh to hear
Chains thou puttest round my heart.
- “Not my fault ’twill surely be
If the hills should vocal prove,
And the trees when us they see,
All should murmur — let us love!
- “Oh, be gentle! — I am dazed,
See the dew is on the grass,
Wakened butterflies amazed
Follow thee as on we pass.
- “Envious night-birds open wide
Their round eyes to gaze awhile,
Nymphs that lean their urns beside
From their grottoes softly smile,
- “And exclaim, by fancy stirred,
‘Hero and Leander they;
We in listening for a word
Let our water fall away.’
- “Let us journey Austrian way,
With the daybreak on our brow;
I be great, and you I say
Rich, because we love shall know.
- “Let us over countries rove,
On our charming steeds content,
In the azure light of love,
And its sweet bewilderment.

“For the charges at our inn,
 You with maiden smiles shall pay;
 I the landlord's heart will win
 In a scholar's pleasant way.

“You, great lady — and I, Count —
 Come, my heart has opened quite.
 We this tale will still recount,
 To the stars that shine at night.”

The melody went on some moments more
 Among the trees the calm moon glistened o'er,
 Then trembled and was hushed; the voice's thrill
 Stopped like alighting birds, and all was still.

XII.

GREAT JOSS AND LITTLE ZENO.

Quite suddenly there showed across the door,
 Three heads which all a festive aspect wore.
 Two men were there; and, dressed in cloth of gold,
 A woman. Of the men one might have told
 Some thirty years, the other younger seemed,
 Was tall and fair, and from his shoulder gleamed
 A gay guitar with ivy leaves enlaced.
 The other man was dark, but pallid-faced
 And small. At the first glance they seemed to be
 But made of perfume and frivolity.
 Handsome they were, but through their comely mien
 A grinning demon might be clearly seen.
 April has flowers where lurk the slugs between.

“Big Joss and little Zeno, pray come here;
 Look now — how dreadful! can I help but fear!”
 Madame Mahaud was speaker. Moonlight there,
 Caressingly enhanced her beauty rare,
 Making it shine and tremble, as if she

So soft and gentle were of things that be
Of air created, and are brought and ta'en
By heavenly flashes. Now, she spoke again:

"Certes, 'tis heavy purchase of a throne,
To pass the night here utterly alone.
Had you not slyly come to guard me now,
I should have died of fright outright I know."
The moonbeams through the open door did fall,
And shine upon the figure next the wall.
Said Zeno, "If I played the Marquis part,
I'd send this rubbish to the auction mart;
Out of the heap should come the finest wine,
Pleasure and gala-fêtes, were it all mine."
And then with scornful hand he touched the thing,
And made the metal like a soul's cry ring.
He laughed — the gauntlet trembled at his stroke.

"Let rest my ancestors" — 'twas Mahaud spoke;
Then murmuring added she, "For you are much
Too small their noble armour here to touch."
And Zeno paled, but Joss with laugh exclaimed,
"Why, all these good black men so grandly named
Are only nests for mice. By Jove, although
They lifelike look and terrible, we know
What is within; just listen, and you'll hear
The vermins' gnawing teeth, yet 'twould appear
These figures once were proudly named Otho,
And Ottocar, and Bela, and Plato.
Alas! the end's not pleasant — puts one out;
To have been kings and dukes — made mighty rout —
Colossal heroes filling tombs with slain,
And, Madame, this to only now remain;
A peaceful nibbling rat to calmly pierce
A prince's noble armour proud and fierce."

"Sing, if you will — but do not speak so loud;
Besides, such things as these," said fair Mahaud,
"In your condition are not understood."

"Well said," made answer Zeno, "'tis a place
 Of wonders — I see serpents, and can trace
 Vampires, and monsters swarming, that arise
 In mist, through chinks, to meet the gazer's eyes."
 Then Mahaud shuddered, and she said: "The wine
 The Abbé made me drink as task of mine,
 Will soon enwrap me in the soundest sleep —
 Swear not to leave me — that you here will keep."
 "I swear," cried Joss, and Zeno, "I also;
 But now at once to supper let us go."

XIII.

THEY SUP.

With laugh and song they to the table went.
 Said Mahaud gaily: "It is my intent
 To make Joss chamberlain. Zeno shall be
 A constable supreme of high degree."
 All three were joyous, and were fair to see.
 Joss ate — and Zeno drank; on stools the pair,
 With Mahaud musing in the regal chair.
 The sound of separate leaf we do not note —
 And so their babble seemed to idly float,
 And leave no thought behind. Now and again
 Joss his guitar made trill with plaintive strain
 Or Tyrolean air; and lively tales they told
 Mingled with mirth all free, and frank, and bold.
 Said Mahaud: "Do you know how fortunate
 You are?" "Yes, we are young at any rate —
 Lovers half crazy — this is truth at least."
 "And more, for you know Latin like a priest,
 And Joss sings well."
 "Ah, yes, our master true,
 Yields us these gifts beyond the measure due."
 "Your master! — who is he?" Mahaud exclaimed.
 "Satan, we say — but Sin you'd think him named,"
 Said Zeno, veiling words in raillery.

"Do not laugh thus," she said with dignity;
 "Peace, Zeno. Joss, you speak, my chamberlain."
 "Madame, Viridis, Countess of Milan,
 Was deemed superb; Diana on the mount
 Dazzled the shepherd boy; ever we count
 The Isabel of Saxony so fair,
 And Cleopatra's beauty all so rare —
 Aspasia's, too, that must with theirs compare —
 That praise of them no fitting language hath.
 Divine was Rhodope — and Venus' wrath
 Was such at Erylesis' perfect throat,
 She dragged her to the forge where Vulcan smote
 Her beauty on his anvil. Well, as much
 As star transcends a sequin, and just such
 As temple is to rubbish-heap, I say,
 You do eclipse their beauty every way.
 Those airy sprites that from the azure smile
 Peris and elfs the while they men beguile,
 Have brows less youthful pure than yours; besides
 Dishevelled they whose shaded beauty hides
 In clouds."

"Flatt'rer," said Mahaud, "you but sing
 Too well."

Then Joss more homage sought to bring;
 "If I were angel under heav'n," said he,
 "Or girl or demon, I would seek to be
 By you instructed in all art and grace,
 And as in school but take a scholar's place.
 Highness, you are a fairy bright, whose hand
 For sceptre vile gave up your proper wand."
 Fair Mahaud mused — then said, "Be silent now;
 You seem to watch me; little 'tis I know,
 Only that from Bohemia Joss doth come,
 And that in Poland Zeno hath his home.
 But you amuse me; I am rich, you poor —
 What boon shall I confer and make secure?"

What gift? ask of me, poets, what you will
 And I will grant it — promise to fulfil.”
 “A kiss,” said Joss.
 “A kiss!” quick anger wrought
 In Mahaud at the minstrel’s shameless thought,
 And flush of indignation warmed her cheek.
 “You do forget to whom it is you speak,”
 She cried.
 “Had I not known your high degree,
 Should I have asked this royal boon,” said he,
 “Obtained or given, a kiss must ever be.
 No gift like king’s — no kiss like that of queen!”
 Queen! And on Mahaud’s face a smile was seen.

XIV.

AFTER SUPPER.

But now the potion proved its subtle power,
 And Mahaud’s heavy eyelids ’gan to lower.
 Zeno, with finger on his lip, looked on —
 Her head next drooped, and consciousness was gone.
 Smiling she slept, serene and very fair,
 He took her hand, which fell all unaware.

“She sleeps,” said Zeno, “now let chance or fate
 Decide for us which has the marquise,
 And which the girl.”

 Upon their faces now
 A hungry tiger’s look began to show.
 “My brother, let us speak like men of sense,”
 Said Joss; “while Mahaud dreams in innocence,
 We grasp all here — and hold the foolish thing —
 Our Friend below to us success will bring.
 He keeps his word; ’tis thanks to him I say,
 No awkward chance has marred our plans to-day.
 All has succeeded — now no human power
 Can take from us this woman and her dower.

Let us conclude. To wrangle and to fight
 For just a yes or no, or to prove right
 The Arian doctrines, all the time the Pope
 Laughs in his sleeve at you — or with the hope
 Some blue-eyed damsel with a tender skin
 And milkwhite dainty hands by force to win —
 This might be well in days when men bore loss
 And fought for Latin or Byzantine Cross;
 When Jack and Rudolf did like fools contend,
 And for a simple wench their valour spend —
 When Pepin held a synod at Leptine,
 And times than now were much less wise and fine.
 We do no longer heap up quarrels thus,
 But better know how projects to discuss.
 Have you the needful dice? ”

“ Yes, here they wait

For us.”

“ Who wins shall have the Marquise;
 Loser, the girl.”

“ Agreed.”

“ A noise I hear? ”

“ Only the wind that sounds like some one near —
 Are you afraid? ” said Zeno.

“ Naught I fear

Save fasting — and that solid earth should gape.
 Let's throw and fate decide — ere time escape.”
 Then rolled the dice.

“ 'Tis four.”

'Twas Joss to throw.

“ Six! — and I neatly win, you see; and lo!
 At bottom of this box I've found Lusace,
 And henceforth my orchestra will have place;
 To it they'll dance. Taxes I'll raise, and they
 In dread of rope and forfeit well will pay;
 Brass trumpet-calls shall be my flutes that lead,
 Where gibbets rise the imposts grow and spread.”
 Said Zeno, “ I've the girl and so is best.”

"She's beautiful," said Joss.

"Yes, 'tis confess'd."

"What shall you do with her?" asked Joss.

"I know.

Make her a corpse," said Zeno; "marked you how
The jade insulted me just now! Too small
She called me — such the words her lips let fall.
I say, that moment ere the dice I threw
Had yawning Hell cried out, 'My son for you
The chance is open still: take in a heap
The fair Lusace's seven towns, and reap
The corn, and wine, and oil of counties ten,
With all their people diligent, and then
Bohemia with its silver mines, and now
The lofty land whence mighty rivers flow
And not a brook returns; add to these counts
The Tyrol with its lovely azure mounts
And France with her historic fleurs-de-lis;
Come now, decide, what 'tis your choice must be?'
I should have answered, 'Vengeance! give to me
Rather than France, Bohemia, or the fair
Blue Tyrol! I my choice, O Hell! declare
For government of darkness and of death,
Of grave and worms.' Brother, this woman hath
As marchioness with absurdity set forth
To rule o'er frontier bulwarks of the north.
In any case to us a danger she,
And having stupidly insulted me
'Tis needful that she die. To blurt all out —
I know that you desire her; without doubt
The flame that rages in my heart warms yours;
To carry out these subtle plans of ours,
We have become as gipsies near this doll,
You as her page — I dotard to control —
Pretended gallants changed to lovers now.
So, brother, this being fact for us to know

Sooner or later, 'gainst our best intent
 About her we should quarrel. Evident
 Is it our compact would be broken through.
 There is one only thing for us to do,
 And that is, kill her."

"Logic very clear,"
 Said musing Joss, "but what of blood shed here?"
 Then Zeno stooped and lifted from the ground
 An edge of carpet — groped until he found
 A ring, which, pulled, an opening did disclose,
 With deep abyss beneath; from it there rose
 The odour rank of crime. Joss walked to see
 While Zeno pointed to it silently.
 But eyes met eyes, and Joss, well pleased, was fain
 By nod of head to make approval plain.

XV.

THE OUBLIETTES.

If sulphurous light had shone from this vile well
 One might have said it was a mouth of hell,
 So large the trap that by some sudden blow
 A man might backward fall and sink below.
 Who looked could see a harrow's threatening teeth,
 But lost in night was everything beneath.
 Partitions blood-stained have a reddened smear,
 And Terror unrelieved is master here.
 One feels the place has secret histories
 Replete with dreadful murderous mysteries,
 And that this sepulchre, forgot to-day,
 Is home of trailing ghosts that grope their way
 Along the walls where spectre reptiles crawl.
 "Our fathers fashioned for us after all
 Some useful things," said Joss; then Zeno spoke;
 "I know what Corbus hides beneath its cloak,
 I and the osprey know its ancient walls
 And how was justice done within its halls."

"And are you sure that Mahaud will not wake?"

"Her eyes are closed as now my fist I make;
She is in mystic and unearthly sleep;
The potion still its power o'er her must keep."
"But she will surely wake at break of day?"
"In darkness."

"What will all the courtiers say
When in the place of her they find two men?"
"To them we will declare ourselves — and then
They at our feet will fall."

"Where leads this hole?"
"To where the crow makes feast and torrents roll,
To desolation. Let us end it now."

These young and handsome men had seemed to grow
Deformed and hideous — so doth foul black heart
Disfigure man, till beauty all depart.
So to the hell within the human face
Transparent is. They nearer move apace;
And Mahaud soundly sleeps as in a bed.
"To work."

Joss seizes her and holds her head
Supporting her beneath her arms, in his;
And then he dared to plant a monstrous kiss
Upon her rosy lips, — while Zeno bent
Before the massive chair, and with intent
Her robe disordered as he raised her feet;
Her dainty ankles thus their gaze to meet.
And while the mystic sleep was all profound,
The pit gaped wide like grave in burial ground.

XVI.

WHAT THEY ATTEMPT BECOMES DIFFICULT.

Bearing the sleeping Mahaud they moved now
Silent and bent with heavy step and slow.
Zeno faced darkness — Joss turned towards the light —

So that the hall to Joss was quite in sight.
 Sudden he stopped — and Zeno, “What now!” called,
 But Joss replied not, though he seemed appalled,
 And made a sign to Zeno, who with speed
 Looked back. Then seemed they changed to stone indeed,
 For both perceived that in the vaulted hall
 One of the grand old knights ranged by the wall
 Descended from his horse. Like phantom he
 Moved with a horrible tranquillity.
 Masked by his helm towards them he came; his tread
 Made the floor tremble — and one might have said
 A spirit of th’ abyss was here; between
 Them and the pit he came — a barrier seen;
 Then said, with sword in hand and visor down,
 In measured tones that had sepulchral grown
 As tolling bell, “Stop, Sigismond, and you,
 King Ladisläus;” at those words, though few,
 They dropped the Marchioness, and in such a way
 That at their feet like rigid corpse she lay.

The deep voice speaking from the visor’s grate
 Proceeded — while the two in abject state
 Cowered low. Joss paled, by gloom and dread o’ercast,
 And Zeno trembled like a yielding mast.
 “You two who listen now must recollect
 The compact all your fellow-men suspect.
 ’Tis this: ‘I, Satan, god of darkened sphere,
 The king of gloom and winds that bring things drear,
 Alliance make with my two brothers dear,
 The Emperor Sigismond and Polish King
 Named Ladisläus. I to surely bring
 Aid and protection to them both alway,
 And never to absent myself or say
 I’m weary. And yet more — I, being lord
 Of sea and land, to Sigismond award
 The earth; to Ladisläus all the sea.

With this condition that they yield to me
When I the forfeit claim — the King his head,
But shall the Emperor give his soul instead.”

Said Joss, “Is’t he? — Spectre with flashing eyes,
And art thou Satan come us to surprise?”
“Much less am I and yet much more.
Oh, kings of crimes and plots! your day is o’er,
But I your lives will only take to-day;
Beneath the talons black your souls let stay
To wrestle still.”

The pair looked stupefied
And crushed. Exchanging looks ’twas Zeno cried,
Speaking to Joss, “Now who — who can it be?”
Joss stammered, “Yes, no refuge can I see;
The doom is on us. But oh, spectre! say
Who are you?”

“I’m the judge.”

“Then mercy, pray.”

The voice replied: “God guides His chosen hand
To be th’ Avenger in your path to stand.
Your hour has sounded, nothing now indeed
Can change for you the destiny decreed,
Irrevocable quite. Yes, I looked on.
Ah! little did you think that any one
To this unwholesome gloom could knowledge bring
That Joss a kaiser was, and Zeno king.
You spoke just now — but why? — too late to plead.
The forfeit’s due and hope should all be dead.
Incurables! For you I am the grave.
Oh, miserable men! whom naught can save.
Yes, Sigismond a kaiser is, and you
A king, O Ladislāus! — it is true.
You thought of God but as a wheel to roll
Your chariot on; you who have king’s control
O’er Poland and its many towns so strong.

You, Milan's Duke, to whom at once belong
 The gold and iron crowns. You, Emperor made
 By Rome, a son of Hercules 'tis said;
 And you of Spartibor. And your two crowns
 Are shining lights; and yet your shadow frowns
 From every mountain land to trembling sea.
 You are at giddy heights twin powers to be
 A glory and a force for all that's great —
 But 'neath the purple canopy of state,
 Th' expanding and triumphant arch you prize,
 'Neath royal power that sacred veils disguise,
 Beneath your crowns of pearls and jewelled stars,
 Beneath your exploits terrible and wars,
 You, Sigismond, have but a monster been,
 And, Ladislāus, you are scoundrel seen.
 Oh, degradation of the sceptre's might
 And sword's — when Justice has a hand like night,
 Foul and polluted; and before this thing,
 This hydra, do the Temple's hinges swing —
 The throne becomes the haunt of all things base!
 Oh, age of infamy and foul disgrace!
 Oh, starry heavens looking on the shame,
 No brow but reddens with resentful flame —
 And yet the silent people do not stir!
 Oh, million arms! what things do you deter —
 Poor sheep, whom vermin-majesties devour,
 Have you not nails with strong desiring power
 To rend these royalties, that you so cower?
 But two are taken,— such as will amaze
 E'en hell itself, when it on them shall gaze.
 Ah, Sigismond and Ladislāus, you
 Were once triumphant, splendid to the view,
 Stifling with your prosperity — but now
 The hour of retribution lays you low.
 Ah, do the vulture and the crocodile
 Shed tears! At such a sight I fain must smile.

It seems to me 'tis very good sometimes
That princes, conquerors stained with bandits' crimes,
Sparkling with splendour, wearing crowns of gold,
Should know the deadly sweat endured of old,
That of Jehoshaphat; should sob and fear,
And after crime th' unclean be brought to bear.
'Tis well — God rules — and thus it is that I
These masters of the world can make to lie
In ashes at my feet. And this was he
Who reigned — and this a Cæsar known to be!
In truth, my old heart aches with very shame
To see such cravens with such noble name.
But let us finish — what has just passed here
Demands thick shrouding, and the time is near.
Th' accursed dice that rolled at Calvary
You rolled a woman's murder to decree:
It was a dark disastrous game to play;
But not for me a moral to essay.
This moment to the misty grave is due,
And far too vile and little human you
To see your evil ways. Your fingers lack
The human sense to test your actions black.
What use in darkness mirror to uphold?
What use that now your deeds should be retold?
Drink of the darkness — greedy of the ill
To which from habit you're attracted still,
Not recognizing in the draught you take
The stench that your atrocities must make.
I only tell you that this burthened age
Tires of your Highnesses, that soil its page,
And of your villainies — and this is why
You now must swell the stream that passes by
Of refuse filth. Oh, horrid scene to show
Of these young men and that young girl just now!
Oh! can you really be of human kind
Breathing pure air of heaven? Do we find

That you are men? Oh, no! for when you laid
 Foul lips upon the mouth of sleeping maid,
 You seemed but ghouls that had come furtively
 From out the tombs; only a horrid lie
 Your human shape; of some strange frightful beast
 You have the soul. To darkness I at least
 Remit you now. Oh, murderer Sigismond
 And Ladisläus pirate, both beyond
 Release — two demons that have broken ban!
 Therefore 'tis time their empire over man,
 And converse with the living, should be o'er;
 Tyrants, behold your tomb your eyes before;
 Vampires and dogs, your sepulchre is here.
 Enter."

He pointed to the gulf so near.

All terrified upon their knees they fell.
 "Oh! take us not in your dread realm to dwell,"
 Said Sigismond. "But, phantom! do us tell
 What thou wouldst have from us — we will obey.
 Oh, mercy! — 'tis for mercy now we pray."
 "Behold us at your feet, oh, spectre dread!"
 And no old crone in feebler voice could plead
 Than Ladisläus did.

But not a word
 Said now the figure motionless, with sword
 In hand. This sovereign soul seemed to commune
 With self beneath his metal sheath; yet soon
 And suddenly, with tranquil voice said he,
 "Princes, your craven spirit wearies me.
 No phantom — only man am I. Arise!
 I like not to be dreaded otherwise
 Than with the fear to which I'm used; know me,
 For it is Eviradnus that you see!"

XVII.

THE CLUB.

As from the mist a noble pine we tell
Grown old upon the heights of Appenzel,
When morning freshness breathes round all the wood,
So Eviradnus now before them stood,
Opening his vizor, which at once revealed
The snowy beard it had so well concealed.
Then Sigismond was still as dog at gaze,
But Ladislāus leaped, and howl did raise,
And laughed and gnashed his teeth, till, like a cloud
That sudden bursts, his rage was all avowed.
“’Tis but an old man after all!” he cried.

Then the great knight, who looked at both, replied,
“Oh, kings! an old man of my time can cope
With two much younger ones of yours, I hope.
To mortal combat I defy you bo
Singly; or, if you will, I’m nothing loth
With two together to contend; choose here
From out the heap what weapon shall appear
Most fit. As you no cuirass wear, I see,
I will take off my own, for all must be
In order perfect — e’en your punishment.”

Then Eviradnus, true to his intent,
Stripped to his Utrecht jerkin; but the while
He calmly had disarmed — with dexterous guile
Had Ladislāus seized a knife that lay
Upon the damask cloth, and slipped away
His shoes; then barefoot, swiftly, silently
He crept behind the knight, with arm held high.
But Eviradnus was of all aware,
And turned upon the murderous weapon there,
And twisted it away; then in a trice

His strong colossal hand grasped like a vice
 The neck of Ladislāus, who the blade
 Now dropped; over his eyes a misty shade
 Showed that the royal dwarf was near to death.

“Traitor!” said Eviradnus in his wrath,
 “I rather should have hewn your limbs away,
 And left you crawling on your stumps, I say,—
 But now die fast.”

Ghastly, with starting eyes,
 The King without a cry or struggle dies.
 One dead — but lo! the other stands bold-faced.
 Defiant; for the knight, when he unlaced
 His cuirass, had his trusty sword laid down,
 And Sigismond now grasps it as his own.
 The monster-youth laughed at the silv’ry beard,
 And, sword in hand, a murderer glad appeared.
 Crossing his arms, he cried, “’Tis my turn now!”
 And the black mounted knights in solemn row
 Were judges of the strife. Before them lay
 The sleeping Mahaud — and not far away
 The fatal pit, near which the champion knight
 With evil Emperor must contend for right,
 Though weaponless he was. And yawned the pit
 Expectant which should be engulfed in it.
 “Now we shall see for whom this ready grave,”
 Said Sigismond, “you dog, whom nought can save!”
 Aware was Eviradnus that if he
 Turned for a blade unto the armoury,
 He would be instant pierced — what can he do?
 The moment is for him supreme. But, lo!
 He glances now at Ladislāus dead,
 And with a smile triumphant and yet dread,
 And air of lion caged to whom is shown
 Some loophole of escape, he bends him down.

"Ha! ha! no other club than this I need!"
 He cried, as seizing in his hands with speed
 The dead King's heels, the body lifted high,
 Then to the frightened Emperor he came nigh,
 And made him shake with horror and with fear,
 The weapon all so ghastly did appear.
 The head became the stone to this strange sling,
 Of which the body was the potent string;
 And while 'twas brandished in a deadly way,
 The dislocated arms made monstrous play
 With hideous gestures, as now upside down
 The bludgeon corpse a giant force had grown.
 "'Tis well!" said Eviradnus, and he cried,
 "Arrange between yourselves, you two allied;
 If hell-fire were extinguished, surely it
 By such a contest might be all relit;
 From kindling spark struck out from dead King's brow,
 Batt'ring to death a living Emperor now."

And Sigismond, thus met and horrified,
 Recoiled to near the unseen opening wide;
 The human club was raised, and struck again . . .
 And Eviradnus did alone remain
 All empty-handed — but he heard the sound
 Of spectres two falling to depths profound;
 Then, stooping o'er the pit, he gazed below,
 And, as half-dreaming now, he murmured low
 "Tiger and jackal meet their portion here,
 'Tis well together they should disappear!"

XVIII.

DAYBREAK.

Then lifts he Mahaud to the ducal chair,
 And shuts the trap with noiseless, gentle care;
 And puts in order everything around,
 So that, on waking, nought should her astound.

"No drop of blood the thing has cost," mused he,
"And that is best indeed."

But suddenly
Some distant bells clang out. The mountains grey
Have scarlet tips, proclaiming dawning day;
The hamlets are astir, and crowds come out —
Bearing fresh branches of the broom — about
To seek their Lady, who herself awakes
Rosy as morn, just when the morning breaks;
Half-dreaming still, she ponders, can it be
Some mystic change has passed, for her to see
One old man in the place of two quite young!
Her wondering eyes search carefully and long.
It may be she regrets the change: meanwhile,
The valiant knight salutes her with a smile,
And then approaching her with friendly mien,
Says, "Madam, has your sleep all pleasant been?"

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

THE INFANTA'S ROSE

(*"Elle est toute petite, une duègne la garde."*)

So small she is! 'neath a duenna's care,
She looks around with but a listless air,
While holding in her hand a fragrant rose;
What she is gazing at she scarcely knows.
Before her lies a sheet of water; pine
And birch in dark reflection on it shine,
A white-winged swan makes cradle of its waves,
That sway to song of branches which it laves,
And the great garden's radiant flowery show;
She seems an angel moulded out of snow.
A stately palace dominates the scene,
With park and fish ponds, where the deer oft lean

To drink the waters clear; starred peacocks too
Beneath the ample foliage are in view.
Around this child the grass bears jewels fine,
Rubies and diamonds seem thereon to shine,
While sapphire water flows from dolphins near;
Her innocence takes added whiteness here;
And clust'ring graces trembling aspect wear.

Beside the water, gazing at her flower,
Which quite delights her for the passing hour,
She stands a figure full of childish grace:
Her bodice is of Genoese point lace,
Her satin skirt has arabesque design,
Worked in gold thread by fingers Florentine.
From urn-like calyx spreads the full-blown rose,
And fills the little hand that holds it close.
Then part the carmine lips as with a smile,
Nostrils dilate, yet with a frown the while
Deep breathing she inhales its fragrance full.
The damask rose, royally beautiful,
So nearly hides her blooming face that we
Scarcely discover where the cheeks may be.
Her sweet blue eyes shine brighter 'neath the lines
Of her brown eyebrows, everything combines
To make her incarnation of delight.
What softness in those azure eyes so bright,
What charm in Marie — her dear name that falls
Upon the ear with sound that prayer recalls!
The splendour dazzles — yet we say, "Poor thing!"
Beneath the sky — with all that life may bring
Before her, — vaguely great herself she feels;
For her comes spring, and light or shadow steals
Upon the scene; for her the sunsets fine,
And gorgeous lustre of the starlight shine;
For her brooks murmur, though themselves unseen,
And nature's fields, eternal and serene,

She views with gravity that queens must show.
No man she'd seen who did not humbly bow;
Duchess of Brabant she would one day be
And govern Flanders, or by southern sea
Sardinia, for the young Infanta she,
Five years of age, disdaining common things,
For thus it happens to the babes of kings:
Their white brows something like a shadow bear,
And with their tottering step begins the air
Of royalty. Rejoicing in her flower,
She waits the gathering empire for her dower.
Her royal look already says "'tis mine,"
While with the love she wins vague awe doth twine.
Should sudden danger looker-on appal,
The scaffold's shadow on his brow would fall
Who her, unbidden, snatched from peril dread.

The sweet child smiled, as though in thought she said,
It is enough to live 'mong flowers I love,
With this my rose in hand and heaven above.

Day fades, the wrangling twitter of the nests,
With purple shadow on the trees, attests
The sunset; while each marble goddess' brow
Flushes at eve with ruddy life-like glow,
As she the mystery of night must show.
All things grow calm; the sun the wave receives
As birds are hidden by the sheltering leaves.

While smiles the child, contented with her flower,
In the vast palace dwells a dreadful power,
Papistical. The lancet windows shine
Like mitres. Through the glass a dim outline
Is seen of figure pacing to and fro,
From room to room its shadow seems to go;
Or else immovable the long hours through

With brow against the glass, and motionless
As monumental stone, yet not the less
The phantom is a horror, wan and dread;
Its step as slow as bell that tolls the dead.
And Death it is — unless it be the king
With lengthened shadow that the night hours bring —
'Tis he — the man a trembling nation fears
Who thus a phantom horrible appears;
Upright, with shoulder 'gainst the chamber wall,
On whom the twilight can but dimly fall,
This frightful being, in the shadow seen,
Sees nothing of the lovely garden sheen,
Or thickets where the pecking birds have been,
Or child, or shining rippled waters spread
Reflecting back the evening sky o'erhead:
Oh, no; those glassy orbs, 'neath cruel brows,
Like ocean depths no plummet ever knows,
Sees mirage that the senses seems to blind.
Could we but know the image in his mind
'Twould be a fleet of noble Spanish ships
That doth all former armaments eclipse;
He sees the vessels fly before the breeze,
Breasting the crested, foaming waves with ease;
The rattling of the bellowing sails he hears,
And sees the Isle his great Armada nears,
Beneath the stars, a white rock clothed in mist
Which o'er the waves doth to his thunders list.

This is the vision which now fills the soul
Of him who would humanity control,
And blinds him to all else; the floating host
He looks upon as lever he may boast
Shall raise the world; he follows it in thought
Across the darkness of the sea; thus wrought
In spirit he a conqueror feels — and so
His mournfulness a gleam of light doth know.

The Koran's Ibis and the Bible's Cain
Hardly had stigmas that as black remain
As that which rests on Second Philip's fame;
A being terrible he was whose name
Meant evil with the ready sword in hand,
A nightmare that o'ershadowed every land.
This royal spectre of the Escorial,
Son of the spectre called Imperial,
Inspired such terror that a lurid light
Seemed from his presence only to affright.
Men trembled if they merely saw pass by
One of his stewards, for his power seemed nigh
To that of the Almighty, so confused
Were they by his determined will, so used
To think of him as changeless and as stable
As are the stars and Heaven's abyss, and able
All things to compass, for they thought his will
Cramped destiny its purpose to fulfil.
The Indies and America he swayed,
Pressed upon Africa, and made afraid
All Europe; yet did gloomy England still
His mind with feelings of disquiet fill.
His mouth was closed, his soul a mystery,
His throne a fraud, based on chicanery.
He was sustained by darkness, as might be
His figure on a dark horse, did we see
Equestrian statue of him; black his wear,
Giving to this so potent Prince the air
Of mourning his existence silently;
And like consuming silent sphinx was he —
Being all-potent what had he to say?
No one had ever seen him smiling gay;
On iron lips like his smiles could not dwell,
Lips only lighted like the gates of hell.
When he shakes off his torpid adder state,
'Tis to assist tormentors, and to sate

His hateful passion for the death-pyre's air,
Till in his eyeball rests its horrid glare.
With all humanity he is at strife,
With thought and freedom and progressive life;
A slave to Papal Rome, his was the shame
To rule as Satan in Christ's holy name.
The thoughts that flowed from his nocturnal mind
Were stealthy, gliding broods of viper kind;
Th' Escorial, Burgos, Aranjuez, his homes,
Never beneath their frigid palace domes
Knew festal scenes where merriment enthalls;
Auto-da-fés made courtly festivals,
And treachery was pastime. Troubled kings
Have often in dim vision night time brings
Their projects opened, and his dreams had power
A weight of evil on the world to shower.
They prompted conquest and oppression vast,
Lightnings came from them to destroy and blast;
Even the people that he thought of said
"We stifle," such the abject terror dread,
Throughout his Empire, of his glance and scowl.
Charles was the vulture — Philip is the owl.

Mournful he looked in pourpoint black for coat,
The Golden Fleece suspended from his throat,
The frigid sentinel of destiny
He seemed, with figure motionless and eye
Resembling vent hole of a cavern dark,
With finger stretched his will to dimly mark,
Though none there be the gesture who can see
He holds command by immobility,
And vaguely writes behest to shadows — while,
Oh strange, unheard of thing,— a smile
Grinds on his lips, sardonic, bitter, stern,
Born of the vision, which he can discern.
Ever more plainly now he gloats to see

His armament in all its majesty;
 In thought he views it following his designs,
 As if he from the zenith ruled its lines;
 And all goes well — calm rolls the ocean dark
 As if th' Armada awed it, as the Ark
 Of old the Deluge. He beholds his fleet
 Spread out in sailing order, all complete,
 The vessels guarding certain spaces fixed
 Like chessmen on a chessboard deftly mixed.
 The decks and masts and bridges undulate
 Like one vast hurdle; waves are subjugate,
 And form a hedge around this sacred force;
 The currents' work it is to make their course
 An aid to debarkation; rocks change mien,
 And round the ships the circling waves are seen,
 As if all love; the surf in pearl-drops falls,
 And all the galleys have their prodigals
 Of strength; see those of Escaut and Adour,
 And hundred colonels that the vessels bore
 With constables; and Germany has lent
 Her ships redoubtable, and Naples sent
 Her brigs, and Cadiz galleons — Lisbon men,
 For they were lions that were needed then.
 Philip, o'erleaping space, leans o'er the scene,
 And hears as well as sees; with gloating mien
 He hears the drums and speaking-trumpets shout,
 And signal cries, and hurrying about;
 He hears the boatswain's whistle, and the rush
 Of agile youths and sailors in the crush
 Of hammock hauling; black sepulchral show
 Of hubbub on his senses now does grow.
 Are they great cormorants or citadels?
 The sails make dull harsh noise, as each one swells,
 Like beating of great wings! and groans the sea
 Beneath the mighty mass that noisily
 Expands itself and swiftly rolls along.

The sombre king smiles at the mighty throng,
 Gloating like hungry vampire o'er his prey.
 Four hundred vessels! and he knows that they
 Bear eighty thousand swords. Oh England, pale!
 He holds thee fast — what now can aught avail?
 The match is near the powder — 'tis his right
 The thunderbolt to hold, who has the might
 To loose the sheaf from out his potent hand,
 Whose orders none can dare to countermand;
 Is he not heir to Cæsar — he to-day
 Whose shadow spreads from Ganges far away
 Even to Posilipo's famous hill?
 Is not all ended when he says "I will?"
 Is it not he who holds fast Victory still
 By the hair? What can his purposes withstand —
 Was it not Philip, he alone who plann'd
 This terrifying fleet to pilot now
 Its onward course? The waves obedient flow;
 Did he his little finger but incline
 All the winged dragons would obey the sign.
 Is he not king — the dismal man whom they,
 This monstrous whirlwind swarm, must all obey!

When Béit-Cifresil — so history tells,
 Son of Abdallah-Béit,— sank the great wells
 Of Cairo's mosque, he 'graved above the sod,
 "The earth is mine — 'tis Heaven belongs to God."
 And, as all tyrants are the same at heart,
 Though things may be confused and seem apart,
 What said the Sultan then this king doth think.

Meanwhile, upon the basin's silent brink,
 Her rose the young Infanta gravely holds,
 And, blue-eyed angel, kisses oft its folds.
 Quite suddenly a blustering breath of air
 The shuddering eve casts o'er the plains so fair;

'A boisterous ground-wind ruffles every lake,
 And bids the rushes tremble, and doth make
 The asphodels and distant myrtle trees
 To shudder, reaching the calm child from these
 With sudden blast, it shakes a tree that's near,
 While shattering the flower she held so dear,
 Leaving alone a thorn. She stooped to gaze,
 And saw upon the stream, with great amaze,
 The total ruin of her cherished flower.
 She could not comprehend this dreadful power
 That dared offend her; and she felt afraid
 As looking up to Heaven all dismayed.
 The lake so calm just now is full of rage,
 And the black foaming waves seem war to wage
 With the poor rose-leaves on the water strewed,
 Drowning and wrecked by turbulence renewed.
 The hundred leaves a thousand waves still meet,
 And one can dream upon this watery sheet
 We see the ruin of a mighty fleet.
 Whereon the staid duenna gravely said
 Unto the musing, frightened little maid,
 Amazed and puzzled, "Madame, bear in mind
 That Princes govern all things — save the wind."

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

THE INQUISITION

THE DEFENCE OF MOMOTOMBO

("*Trouvant les tremblements de terre trop fréquents.*")

"The custom of baptising volcanoes is traced to the earliest times of the conquest. All the craters of Nicaragua were thus sanctified with the exception of Momotombo, whence none of the priests commissioned to plant there the cross ever returned."—SQUIER, "*Travels in South America.*"

FINDING that earthquakes far too much prevailed,
 The Spanish kings with sacred rites assailed

Volcanic mountains of the New World land,
Baptising them; and to the priestly hand
They all submitted, saving only one,
But Momotombo would not have it done.
Divers the surpliced priests who — choice of Rome —
Essayed to reach the frowning mountain's dome,
Bearing the Sacrament the Church decrees,
With eyes on Heaven fixed, but of all these —
And many were they — none were heard of more.

“ Oh Momotombo, thou colossus hoar,
Who ponderest by the sea, whilst thou hast made
Tiara of thy crater's flame and shade,
Why, when thy dreadful threshold we draw near,
And bring thee God, why wilt thou not us hear? ”
Stayed was the belching of its lava tide,
While gravely Momotombo thus replied:

“ I liked not much the god you chased away,
His jaws were black with gory rot alway.
Eater of human flesh was he, this god,
And miser hiding gold beneath the sod.
His cave, the porch to frightful yard, was made
Sepulchral Temple where his Pontiff stayed,
The slaughterer deaf, deformed, of hideous mien,
Bleeding between his teeth was ever seen
A corpse, while round his wrists the serpents twined;
And horrid skeletons of human kind
Grinn'd at his feet. Oh cruel were the ways
Of shocking murder in those dreadful days,
Blackening the firmament sublime. At this
I groaned from out the depths of my abyss.
Thus when came proudly o'er the trembling sea
White men, from that side whence unfailingly
The morning ever breaks, it seemed to me
That to receive them well were only wise.

'White men,' said I, 'resemble azure skies,
 Surely the colour of their souls we trace,
 It must be like the colour of their face,
 The god that these men worship must be good;
 Murders will cease,' and I in happy mood
 Rejoiced — the ancient priest I hated so;
 But when the new one's work began to show,
 When I could see the Inquisition flame,
 That ne'er was quenched, taking the Holy name,
 A mournful torch that to my level reached,
 Just Heaven! when thus you daily taught and preached,
 And Torquemada tried with fiery might
 To dissipate the darkness of the night
 Of savage heathendom — when I saw then
 How He would civilize — at Lima, when
 I saw the osier giants, in the strife,
 Filled to the brim with childish baby life
 Crackling above the mighty furnace heat,
 And curls of smoke round burning women meet,
 Choked by the stench of every horrid deed,
Auto-da-fé according to your creed,
 I — who but shadow brightly burn away —
 Repented of my gladness, forced to say,
 When looking at the strangers' god more near,
 'To change is not worth while it doth appear!' "

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

THE SWISS MERCENARIES

(" *Lorsque le regiment des hallebardiers.* ")

WHEN the regiment of Halberdiers
 Is proudly marching by,
 The eagle of the mountain screams
 From out his stormy sky;

Who speaketh to the precipice,
And to the chasm sheer ;
Who hovers o'er the thrones of kings,
And bids the caitiffs fear.
King of the peak and glacier,
King of the cold, white scalps —
He lifts his head, at that close tread,
The eagle of the Alps.

O shame ! those men that march below —
O ignominy dire !
Are the sons of my free mountains
Sold for imperial hire.
Ah ! the vilest in the dungeon !
Ah ! the slave upon the seas —
Is great, is pure, is glorious,
Is grand compared with these,
Who, born amid my holy rocks,
In solemn places high,
Where the tall pines bend like rushes
When the storm goes sweeping by ;

Yet give the strength of foot they learned
By perilous path and flood,
And from their blue-eyed mothers won,
The old, mysterious blood ;
The daring that the good south wind
Into their nostrils blew,
And the proud swelling of the heart
With each pure breath they drew ;
The graces of the mountain glens,
With flowers in summer gay ;
And all the glories of the hills
To earn a lackey's pay.

Their country free and joyous —
She of the rugged sides —

She of the rough peaks arrogant
Whereon the tempest rides:
Mother of the unconquered thought
And of the savage form,
Who brings out of her study heart
The hero and the storm;
Who giveth freedom unto man,
And life unto the beast;
Who hears her silver torrents ring
Like joy-bells at a feast;

Who hath her caves for palaces,
And where her châteaux stand —
The proud, old archer of Altorf,
With his good bow in his hand.
Is she to suckle gaolers?
Shall shame and glory rest,
Amid her lakes and glaciers,
Like twins upon her breast?
Shall the two-headed eagle,
Marked with her double blow,
Drink of her milk through all those hearts
Whose blood he bids to flow?

Say, was it pomp ye needed,
And all the proud array
Of courtly joust and high parade
Upon a gala day?
Look up; have not my valleys
Their torrents white with foam —
Their lines of silver bullion
On the blue hillocks of home?
Doth not sweet May embroider
My rocks with pearls and flowers?
Her fingers trace a richer lace
Than yours in all my bowers.

Are not my old peaks gilded
 When the sun arises proud,
 And each one shakes a white mist plume
 Out of the thunder-cloud?
 O, neighbour of the golden sky —
 Sons of the mountain sod —
 Why wear a base king's colours
 For the livery of God?
 O shame! despair! to see my Alps
 Their giant shadows fling
 Into the very waiting-room
 Of tyrant and of king!

O thou deep heaven, unsullied yet,
 Into thy gulfs sublime —
 Up azure tracks of flaming light —
 Let my free pinion climb;
 Till from my sight, in that clear light,
 Earth and her crimes be gone —
 The men who act the evil deeds —
 The caitiffs who look on.
 Far, far into that space immense,
 Beyond the vast white veil,
 Where distant stars come out and shine,
 And the great sun grows pale.

BP. ALEXANDER.

AFTER THE BATTLE

(*"Mon père, ce héros au sourire si doux."*)

My father, hero of benignant mien,
 On horseback visited the gory scene,
 After the battle as the evening fell,
 And took with him a trooper loved right well,
 Because of bravery and presence bold.

The field was covered with the dead, all cold,
 And shades of night were deepening: came a sound,
 Feeble and hoarse, from something on the ground;
 It was a Spaniard of the vanquished force,
 Who dragged himself with pain beside their course;
 Wounded and bleeding, livid and half dead,
 "Give me to drink — in pity, drink!" he said.
 My father, touched, stretched to his follower now,
 A flask of rum that from his saddle-bow
 Hung down: "The poor soul — give him drink," said he.
 But while the trooper prompt, obediently
 Stooped towards the other, he of Moorish race
 Pointed a pistol at my father's face,
 And with a savage oath the trigger drew;
 The hat flew off, a bullet passing through.
 As swerved his charger in a backward stride,
 "Give him to drink the same," my father cried.

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

POOR FOLK

(" *Il est nuit. La cabane est pauvre.*")

'Tis night — within the close stout cabin door,
 The room is wrapped in shade save where there fall
 Some twilight rays that creep along the floor,
 And show the fisher's nets upon the wall.

In the dim corner, from the oaken chest,
 A few white dishes glimmer; through the shade
 Stands a tall bed with dusky curtains dressed,
 And a rough mattress at its side is laid.

Five children on the long low mattress lie —
 A nest of little souls, it heaves with dreams;

In the high chimney the last embers die,
And redden the dark room with crimson gleams.

The mother kneels and thinks, and pale with fear,
She prays alone, hearing the billows shout:
While to wild winds, to rocks, to midnight drear,
The ominous old ocean sobs without.

.

Poor wives of fishers! Ah! 'tis sad to say,
Our sons, our husbands, all that we love best,
Our hearts, our souls, are on those waves away,
Those ravening wolves that know not ruth, nor rest.

Think how they sport with these beloved forms;
And how the clarion-blowing wind unties
Above their heads the tresses of the storms:
Perchance even now the child, the husband dies.

For we can never tell where they may be
Who, to make head against the tide and gale,
Between them and the starless, soulless sea
Have but one bit of plank, with one poor sail.

Terrible fear! We seek the pebbly shore,
Cry to the rising billows, "Bring them home."
Alas! what answer gives their troubled roar,
To the dark thought that haunts us as we roam

Janet is sad: her husband is alone,
Wrapped in the black shroud of this bitter night:
His children are so little, there is none
To give him aid. "Were they but old, they might."
Ah, mother! when they too are on the main,
How wilt thou weep: "Would they were young again!"

She takes his lantern — 'tis his hour at last:
She will go forth, and see if the day breaks,

And if his signal-fire be at the mast;

Ah, no — not yet — no breath of morning wakes.

No line of light o'er the dark water lies;

It rains, it rains, how black is rain at morn:

The day comes trembling, and the young dawn cries —

Cries like a baby fearing to be born.

Sudden her humane eyes that peer and watch

Through the deep shade, a mouldering dwelling find,

No light within — the thin door shakes — the thatch

O'er the green walls is twisted of the wind.

Yellow, and dirty, as a swollen rill,

“Ah, me,” she saith, “here does that widow dwell;

Few days ago my good man left her ill:

I will go in and see if all be well.”

She strikes the door, she listens, none replies,

And Janet shudders. “Husbandless, alone,

And with two children — they have scant supplies.

Good neighbour! She sleeps heavy as a stone.”

She calls again, she knocks, 'tis silence still;

No sound — no answer — suddenly the door,

As if the senseless creature felt some thrill

Of pity, turned — and open lay before.

She entered, and her lantern lighted all

The house so still, but for the rude waves' din.

Through the thin roof the plashing rain-drops fall,

But something terrible is couched within.

“So, for the kisses that delight the flesh,

For mother's worship, and for children's bloom,

For song, for smile, for love so fair and fresh,

For laugh, for dance, there is one goal — the tomb.”

And why does Janet pass so fast away?
What hath she done within that house of dread?
What foldeth she beneath her mantle grey?
And hurries home, and hides it in her bed:
With half-averted face, and nervous tread,
What hath she stolen from the awful dead?

The dawn was whitening over the sea's verge
As she sat pensive, touching broken chords
Of half-remorseful thought, while the hoarse surge
Howled a sad concert to her broken words.

"Ah, my poor husband! we had five before,
Already so much care, so much to find,
For he must work for all. I give him more.
What was that noise? His step! Ah, no! the wind.

"That I should be afraid of him I love!
I have done ill. If he should beat me now,
I would not blame him. Did not the door move?
Not yet, poor man." She sits with careful brow
Wrapped in her inward grief; nor hears the roar
Of winds and waves that dash against his prow,
Nor the black cormorant shrieking on the shore.

Sudden the door flies open wide, and lets
Noisily in the dawn-light scarcely clear,
And the good fisher, dragging his damp nets,
Stands on the threshold, with a joyous cheer.

"'Tis thou!" she cries, and, eager as a lover,
Leaps up and holds her husband to her breast;
Her greeting kisses all his vesture cover;
"'Tis I, good wife!" and his broad face expressed
How gay his heart that Janet's love made light.
"What weather was it?" "Hard." "Your fish-
ing?" "Bad.

The sea was like a nest of thieves to-night;
But I embrace thee, and my heart is glad.

“There was a devil in the wind that blew;
I tore my net, caught nothing, broke my line,
And once I thought the bark was broken too;
What did you all the night long, Janet mine?”

She, trembling in the darkness, answered, “I!
Oh, nought — I sew’d, I watch’d, I was afraid,
The waves were loud as thunders from the sky;
But it is over.” Shyly then she said —

“Our neighbour died last night; it must have been
When you were gone. She left two little ones,
So small, so frail — William and Madeline;
The one just lisps, the other scarcely runs.”

The man looked grave, and in the corner cast
His old fur bonnet, wet with rain and sea,
Muttered awhile, and scratched his head,—at last:
“We have five children, this makes seven,” said he.

“Already in bad weather we must sleep
Sometimes without our supper. Now! Ah, well —
’Tis not my fault. These accidents are deep;
It was the good God’s will. I cannot tell.

“Why did He take the mother from those scraps,
No bigger than my fist. ’Tis hard to read;
A learned man might understand, perhaps —
So little, they can neither work nor need.

“Go fetch them, wife; they will be frightened sore,
If with the dead alone they waken thus.
That was the mother knocking at our door,
And we must take the children home to us.

" Brother and sister shall they be to ours,
 And they will learn to climb my knee at even;
 When He shall see these strangers in our bowers,
 More fish, more food, will give the God of Heaven.

" I will work harder; I will drink no wine —
 Go fetch them. Wherefore dost thou linger, dear?
 Not thus were wont to move those feet of thine,"
 She drew the curtain, saying, " They are here!"
 BP. ALEXANDER.

SONG OF THE PROW-GILDERS

(*" Nous sommes les doreurs de proues."*)

WE are the gilders of the prows.
 Wheel-like awirl, strong winds arouse
 The verdant sea's rotundity,
 Mingling the shadows and the gleams,
 And 'mid the folds of sombre streams
 Drawing slant vessels steadfastly.

The shrilling squall close-circling flies,
 The tortuous winds deep guiles devise,
 The Archer black in his horn doth blow;
 These sounds bode death's dark mystery,
 And through these prodigies 'tis we
 That make the golden spectres go.

For the ship's prow is like a ghost.
 Still wave-engirdled, tempest-tossed;
 Proudly from our bazaars she sails
 To serve the lightnings with a mark,
 And midst the hazards of the dark
 To be an eye that never fails.

King, 'neath the plane-trees pleasure thee;
 Sultan to the Sultanas see,
 And hide beneath long veils the grace
 Of myriad girls with names untold
 Who yestermorn stark-bare were sold
 By auction on the market-place.

What cares the wave! What cares the air!
 This girl is dark and that is fair,
 Of Halep she, or Ispahan;
 Before thy face they all make quake;
 What heed thereof forsooth should take
 The vast mysterious ocean!

Ye have each one your revelry.
 Be thou the prince, the tempest he.
 He lightning hath, the yataghan
 Thou, to chastise your multitudes;
 Beneath its lord the people broods,
 The wave beneath the hurricane.

For one and the other do we strive.
 This double task is ours alive; —
 And thus we sing: O stern Emir,
 Thine eyes of steel, thy heart of ice
 Keep not the little swallow's eyes
 From trustful sleep when night is near.

For holy Nature is eterne
 And tranquil; living souls that yearn
 God sheltereth beneath His wing;
 Amid the all-serene sweet shade,
 With hearts for ever undismayed
 By spectral terrors, do we sing.

Unto our lords we leave the palm
 And statelier laurel! We are calm
 And steadfast while within their hand

They have not ta'en the minished stars,
And the swift flight of the cloud-cars
Depends not on a king's command.

The summer glows, the flowers bloom bright,
Small rose-buds tip the bosoms white;
One hunts, one laughs; the craftsmen still
Sing, and the priests still sigh and sleep;
Slight shadowy fawns through copses deep
Fleeing, make greyhounds strain and thrill.

If soothly, Sultan, thou hadst quaffed
All proffered pleasures, the sweet draught
Would surely quickly poison thee!
Live thou and reign,—thy life is sweet.
Couched on the moss the roebuck fleet
In forest slumbers dreamfully.

Who mounts aloft must needs descend;
The hours are flame, dust is their end;
The tomb saith unto man: "Behold!"—
Times change, blithe birds not alway sing,
Waves lisp, and straight are thundering,
While aye around are omens rolled:

The hour is sultry; women bare
Lave lovely limbs nigh blooms less fair;
All lightest sorrows now repose;
O'er blue tranced lakes white clouds are driven;
With the most golden star of heaven;
Crowneth itself earth's reddest rose.

Thy galley we have gold-arrayed
By sixty pairs of oars is swayed
Which from Lepanto, 'mid the surge,
Subdue the tempest and the tide,
And each of which is hotly plied
By four slaves shackled, 'neath the scourge.

N. R. T.

LA VOIX DE GUERNESEY.—1868

MENTANA¹

(VICTOR HUGO TO GARIBALDI.)

(“*Ces jeunes gens, combien étaient-ils?*”)

I.

YOUNG soldiers of the noble Latin blood, I
How many are ye — Boys? Four thousand odd.
How many are there dead? Six hundred: count!
Their limbs lie strewn about the fatal mount,
Blackened and torn, eyes gummed with blood, hearts rolled
Out from their ribs, to give the wolves of the wold
A red feast; nothing of them left but these
Pierced relics, underneath the olive trees,
Show where the gin was sprung — the scoundrel-trap
Which brought those hero-lads their foul mishap.
See how they fell in swathes — like barley-ears!
Their crime? to claim Rome and her glories theirs;
To fight for Right and Honour; — foolish names!
Come — Mothers of the soil! Italian dames!
Turn the dead over! — try your battle luck!
(Bearded or smooth, to her that gave him suck
The man is always child) — Stay, here's a brow
Split by the Zouaves' bullets! This one, now,
With the bright curly hair soaked so in blood,
Was yours, ma donna! — sweet and fair and good.

¹ The Battle of Mentana, so named from a village by Rome, was fought between the allied French and Papal Armies and the Volunteer Forces of Garibaldi, Nov. 3rd, 1867.

The spirit sat upon his fearless face
 Before they murdered it, in all the grace
 Of manhood's dawn. Sisters, here's yours! his lips,
 Over whose bloom the bloody death-foam slips,
 Lisped house-songs after you, and said your name
 In loving prattle once. That hand, the same
 Which lies so cold over the eyelids shut,
 Was once a small pink baby-fist, and wet
 With milk beads from thy yearning breasts.

Take thou

Thine eldest,—thou, thy youngest born. Oh, flow
 Of tears never to cease! Oh, Hope quite gone,
 Dead like the dead!—Yet could they live alone—
 Without their Tiber and their Rome? and be
 Young and Italian—and not also free?
 They longed to see the ancient eagle try
 His lordly pinions in a modern sky.
 They bore—each on himself—the insults laid
 On the dear foster-land: of naught afraid,
 Save of not finding foes enough to dare
 For Italy. Ah, gallant, free, and rare
 Young martyrs of a sacred cause,—Adieu!
 No more of life—no more of love—for you!
 No sweet long-straying in the star-lit glades
 At Ave-Mary, with the Italian maids;
 No welcome home!

II.

This Garibaldi now, the Italian boys
 Go mad to hear him—take to dying—take
 To passion for “the pure and high;”—God's sake!
 It's monstrous, horrible! One sees quite clear
 Society—our charge—must shake with fear,
 And shriek for help, and call on us to act
 When there's a hero, taken in the fact.
 If Light shines in the dark, there's guilt in that!
 What's viler than a lantern to a bat?

III.

Your Garibaldi missed the mark! You see
 The end of life's to cheat, and not to be
 Cheated: The knave is nobler than the fool!
 Get all you can and keep it! Life's a pool,
 The best luck wins; if Virtue starves in rags,
 I laugh at Virtue; here's my money-bags!
 Here's righteous metal! We have kings, I say,
 To keep cash going, and the game at play;
 There's why a king wants money — he'd be missed
 Without a fertilizing civil list.

Do but try

The question with a steady moral eye!
 The colonel strives to be a brigadier,
 The marshal, constable. Call the game fair,
 And pay your winners! Show the trump, I say!
 A renegade's a rascal — till the day
 They make him Pasha: is he rascal then?
 What with these sequins? Bah! you speak to Men,
 And Men want money — power — luck — life's joy —
 Those take who can: we could, and fobbed Savoy;
 For those who live content with honest state,
 They're public pests; knock we 'em on the pate!
 They set a vile example! Quick — arrest
 That Fool, who ruled and failed to line his nest.
 Just hit a bell, you'll see the clapper shake —
 Meddle with Priests, you'll find the barrack wake —
 Ah! Princes know the People's a tight boot,
 March 'em sometimes to be shot and to shoot,
 Then they'll wear easier. So let them preach
 The righteousness of howitzers; and teach
 At the fog end of prayer: "Now, slit their throats!
 My holy Zouaves! my good yellow-coats!"
 We like to see the Holy Father send
 Powder and steel and lead without an end,
 To feed Death fat; and broken battles mend.
So they!

IV.

But thou, our Hero, baffled, foiled,
 The Glorious Chief who vainly bled and toiled.
 The trust of all the Peoples — Freedom's Knight!
 The Paladin unstained — the Sword of Right!
 What wilt thou do, whose land finds thee but gaols!
 The banished claim the banished! deign to cheer
 The refuge of the homeless — enter here,
 And light upon our households dark will fall
 Even as thou enterest. Oh, Brother, all,
 Each one of us — hurt with thy sorrows' proof,
 Will make a country for thee of his roof.
 Come, sit with those who live as exiles learn:
 Come! Thou whom kings could conquer but not yet turn.
 We'll talk of "Palermo"¹ — "the Thousand" true,
 Will tell the tears of blood of France to you;
 Then by his own great Sea we'll read, together,
 Old Homer in the quiet summer weather,
 And after, thou shalt go to thy desire
 While that faint star of Justice grows to fire.²

V.

Oh, Italy! hail your Deliverer,
 Oh, Nations! almost he gave Rome to her!
 Strong-arm and prophet heart had all but come
 To win the city, and to make it "Rome."
 Calm, of the antique grandeur, ripe to be
 Named with the noblest of her history.

¹ Palermo was taken immediately after the Garibaldian volunteers, 1,000 strong, landed at Marsala to inaugurate the rising which made Italy free.

² Both poet and his idol lived to see the French Republic for the fourth time proclaimed. When Hugo rose in the Senate, on the first occasion after his return to Paris after the expulsion of the Napoleons, and his white head was seen above that of Rouher, ex-Prime Minister of the Empire, all the house shuddered, and in a nearly unanimous voice shouted. "The judgment of God! expiation!"

He would have Romanized your Rome — controlled
Her glory, lordships, Gods, in a new mould.
Her spirits' fervour would have melted in
The hundred cities with her; made a twin
Vesuvius and the Capitol; and blended
Strong Juvenal's with the soul, tender and splendid,
Of Dante — smelted old with new alloy —
Stormed at the Titans' road full of bold joy
Whereby men storm Olympus. Italy,
Weep! — This man could have made one Rome of thee!

VI.

But the crime's wrought! Who wrought it?
Honest Man —
Priest Pius? No! Each does but what he can.
Yonder's the criminal! The warlike wight
Who hides behind the ranks of France to fight,
Greek Sinon's blood crossed thick with Judas-Jew's,
The Traitor who with smile which true men woos,
Lip mouthing pledges — hand grasping the knife —
Waylaid French Liberty, and took her life.
Kings, he is of you! fit companion! one
Whom day by day the lightning looks upon
Keen; while the sentenced man triples his guard
And trembles; for his hour approaches hard.
Ye ask me "when?" I say *soon!* Hear ye not
Yon muttering in the skies above the spot?
Mark ye no coming shadow, Kings? the shroud
Of a great storm driving the thunder-cloud?
Hark! like the thief-catcher who pulls the pin,
God's thunder asks *to speak to one within!*

VII.

And meanwhile this death-odour — this corpse-scent
Which makes the priestly incense redolent
Of rotting men, and the Te Deums stink —

Reeks through the forests — past the river's brink,
 O'er wood and plain and mountain, till it fouls
 Fair Paris in her pleasures; then it prowls,
 A deadly stench, to Crete, to Mexico,
 To Poland — wheresoe'er kings' armies go:
 And Earth one Upas-tree of bitter sadness,
 Opening vast blossoms of a bloody madness.
 Throats cut by thousands — slain men by the ton!
 Earth quite corpse-cumbered, though the half not done!
 They lie, stretched out, where the blood-puddles soak,
 Their black lips gaping with the last cry spoke.
 "Stretched;" nay! *sown broadcast*; yes, the word is "*sown*."
 The fallows Liberty — the harsh wind blown
 Over the furrows, Fate: and these stark dead
 Are grain sublime, from Death's cold fingers shed
 To make the Abyss conceive: the Future bear
 More noble Heroes! Swell, oh, Corpses dear!
 Rot quick to the green blade of Freedom! Death!
 Do thy kind will with them! They without breath,
 Stripped, scattered, ragged, festering, slashed and blue,
 Dangle towards God the arms French shot tore through
 And wait in meekness, Death! for Him and You!

VIII.

Oh, France! oh, People! sleeping unabashed!
 Liest thou like a hound when it was lashed?
 Thou liest! thine own blood fouling both thy hands,
 And on thy limbs the rust of iron bands,
 And round thy wrists the cut where cords went deep.
 Say did they numb thy soul, that thou didst sleep?
 Alas! sad France is grown a cave for sleeping,
 Which a worse night than Midnight holds in keeping,
 Thou sleepest sottish — lost to life and fame —
 While the stars stare on thee, and pale for shame.
 Stir! rouse thee! Sit! if thou know'st not to rise;
 Sit up, thou tortured sluggard! ope thine eyes!

Stretch thy brawn, Giant! Sleep is foul and vile!
Art fagged, art deaf, art dumb? art blind this while?
They lie who say so! Thou dost know and feel
The things they do to thee and thine. The heel
That scratched thy neck in passing — whose? Canst say?
Yes, yes, 'twas *his*, and this is his *fête-day*.
Oh, thou that wert of humankind — couched so —
A beast of burden on this dunghill! oh!
Bray to them, Mule! Oh, Bullock! bellow then!
Since they have made thee blind, grope in thy den!
Do something, Outcast One, that wast so grand!
Who knows if thou putt'st forth they poor maimed hand,
There may be venging weapon within reach!
Feel with both hands — with both huge arms go stretch
Along the black wall of thy cellar. Nay,
There *may* be some odd thing hidden away?
Who knows — there *may*! Those great hands might so
come
In course of ghastly fumble through the gloom,
Upon a sword — a *sword*! The hands once clasp
Its hilt, must wield it with a Victor's grasp.

EDWIN ARNOLD, C.S.I.

LES CHAUSONS DES RUES ET DES BOIS.—1865

LOVE OF THE WOODLAND

(“*Orphée au bois du Caystre.*”)

ORPHEUS, in Cayster's tangled
Woodways, 'neath the stars' pale light,
Listened laughters weird and jangled
Of the viewless ones of night.

Phtas, the Theban sibyl, dreaming
Nigh the hushed Phygalian heights,
Saw on far horizon streaming
Ebon forms 'mong silvery lights.

Æschylus, soft hazes threading
Of sweet Sicily, soul-subdued
Wandered beneath moonbeams shedding
Mellow flute-notes through the wood.

Pliny, lo! — high thoughts denying
For Miletus' nymphs most fair,—
Dainty rosy limbs espying,
Begs a boon on the amorous air.

Plautus, nigh Viterbo, straying
Through the orchard-bowers sun-bright,
In each palm gold fruit is weighing
Such as gods rejoiced to bite.

Ah, Versailles! Haunt most delightful!
 Faunus there, one foot i' the wave,
 While Boileau waxed shrill and spiteful,
 Golden rhymes to Molière gave.

Dante sombre-souled, abiding
 Scatheless in the deepest hell,
 Turned to watch fair women gliding
 Thro' the boughs 'neath eve's calm spell.

Chénier, under willows sleeping,
 Saw in dream a vision sweet:
 Lovely lasses laughing, weeping,
 For whom Virgil's heart quick-beat.

Shakespeare, watching 'neath the lazy
 Branches of the forest-lord,
 Heard, while blusht each meadow-daisy,
 Fairy-trippings o'er green sward.

O deep woodlands soul-entrancing,
 Haunted yet by Gods are ye!
 Yet the goat-foot Satyr's dancing
 To Pan's rustic melody!

N. R. T.

BABY'S SLEEP AT DAWN

(*"L'humble chambre a l'air de sourire."*)

FAINT smiles the humble little room;
 On an old chest some roses blush:
 Beholding here dissolve night's gloom,
 Priests had said, Peace! and women, Hush!

Yonder what small recess is seen,
 Whereto the tenderest radiance creeps?
 O more than angel-guard serene!
 Aurora watches; baby sleeps.

Deep in that nook a tiny thing
 Lies lulled within a cradle white;
 Amid the shadow quivering
 Heaven only knows with what delight.

Lo, in her dimpled hand tight-prest
 She holds a toy, sweet source of mirth!
 Cherubs in heaven with palms are blest,
 Babies with rattles upon earth.

What sleep is hers! Ah, who dare say
 What dreams make *such* smiles come and go;
 Haply she sees some bright dawn-way
 With angels passing to and fro.

Her rosy arm moves momentarily
 As if to wave some sweet adieu;
 Gentle her breathing as may be
 A butterfly's amid the blue.

Aurora's loth to chase those dreams:
 Naught's so august, so pure, so mild,
 As this bright eye of God that beams
 Upon the closed eyes of a child.

N. R. T.

LION'S SLEEP AT NOON

(*"Le lion dort, seul sous sa voûte."*)

DEEP in his cave the lion rests;
 Enthralled by that prodigious slumber
 The sultry midday sun invests
 With fiery visions without number.

CHANSONS DES RUES ET DES BOIS 267

The deserts list awhile with dread,
Then freelier breathe; their tyrant's home.
For the lone tracts quake 'neath his tread
What time this mighty one doth roam.

His hot breath heaves his tawny hide;
In darkness steeped is his red eye;
Deep in the cavern, on his side
He sleeps, outstretchèd formidably.

Sleep lulls to rest his sateless rage;
He dreams, oblivious of all wrong,
With calm brow that denotes the sage,
With dread fangs that bespeak the strong.

The wells are drunk by noontide's drouth;
Of nought but slumber is he fain.
Like a cavern is his huge mouth,
And like a forest his ruddy mane.

He scans vast craggy heights difform,
Ossa or Pelion scales with might,
Amid those darkling dreams enorme
Wherein but lions take delight.

Upon the bare rock nought is heard
Where lordly feet are wont to stray.
If now one heavy paw were stirred,
What myriad flies would flit away!

N. R. T.

L'ANNEE TERRIBLE.—1872

TO LITTLE JEANNE

(“*Vous eûtes donc hier un an.*”)

YOU'VE lived a year, then, yesterday, sweet child,
Prattling thus happily! So fledgelings wild,
New-hatched in warmer nest 'neath sheltering bough,
Chirp merrily to feel their feathers grow.
Your mouth's a rose, Jeanne! In these volumes grand
Whose pictures please you — while I trembling stand
To see their big leaves tattered by your hand —
Are noble lines; but nothing half your worth,
When all your tiny frame rustles with mirth
To welcome me. No work of author wise
Can match the thought half springing to your eyes,
And your dim reveries, unfettered, strange,
Regarding man with all the boundless range
Of angel innocence. Methinks, 'tis clear
That God's not far, Jeanne, when I see you here.

Ah! twelve months old: 'tis quite an age, and brings
Grave moments, though your soul to rapture clings,
You're at that hour of life most like to heaven,
When present joy no cares, no sorrows leaven:
When man no shadow feels: if fond caress
Round parent twines, children the world possess.
Your waking hopes, your dreams of mirth and love

From Charles to Alice, father to mother, rove;
No wider range of view your heart can take
Than what her nursing and his bright smiles make;
They two alone on this your opening hour
Can gleams of tenderness and gladness pour:
They two — none else, Jeanne! Yet 'tis just, and I,
Poor grandsire, dare but to stand humbly by.
You come — I go: though gloom alone my right,
Blest be the destiny which gives you light.

Your fair-haired brother George and you beside
Me play — in watching you is all my pride; [!]
And all I ask — by countless sorrows tried —
The grave; o'er which in shadowy form may show
Your cradles gilded by the morning's glow.

Pure new-born wonderer! your infant life
Strange welcome found, Jeanne, in this time of strife:
Like wild-bee humming through the woods your play,
And baby smiles have dared a world at bay:
Your tiny accents lisp their gentle charms
To mighty Paris clashing mighty arms.
Ah! when I see you, child, and when I hear
You sing, or try, with low voice whispering near,
And touch of fingers soft, my grief to cheer,
I dream this darkness, where the tempests groan,
Trembles, and passes with half-uttered moan.
For though these hundred towers of Paris bend,
Though close as foundering ship her glory's end,
Though rocks the universe, which we defend;
Still to great cannon on our ramparts piled,
God sends His blessing by a little child.

MARWOOD TUCKER.

FROM THE INVESTED WALLS OF PARIS

(“*L’Occident était blanc.*”)

BRIGHT white the West, dense black the Eastern sky:
 As some invisible arm from heaven let fall,
 To serve eve’s columns for a canopy,
 O’er this horizon a shroud, o’er that a pall.

Night shut in earth, as ’twere a prison cold.
 Last plaint of bird, last light of leaf, were quenched.
 Descending, again I looked toward heaven — behold!
 In the low West a bright blade shone, blood-drenched.

That made me muse of some vast duel dread
 Fought by a God matched ’gainst some giant-birth:
 The awful sword o’ the vanquished one had said,
 Bloodied with battle, fallen from heaven to earth!
N. R. T.

TO A SICK CHILD DURING THE SIEGE OF PARIS

(“*Si vous continuez toute pâle.*”)

If you continue thus so wan and white;
 If I, one day, behold
 You pass from out our dull air to the light,
 You, infant — I, so old:
 If I the thread of our two lives must see
 Thus blent to human view,
 I who would fain know death was near to me,
 And far away for you;

If your small hands remain such fragile things;
 If, in your cradle stirred,
You have the mien of waiting there for wings,
 Like to some new-fledged bird;
Not rooted to our earth you seem to be.
 If still, beneath the skies,
You turn, O Jeanne, on our mystery
 Soft, discontented eyes!
If I behold you, gay and strong no more;
 If you mope sadly thus;
If you behind you have not shut the door,
 Through which you came to us;
If you no more like some fair dame I see
 Laugh, walk, be well and gay;
If like a little soul you seem to me
 That fain would fly away —
I'll deem that to this world, where oft are blent
 The pall and swaddling-band,
You came but to depart — an angel sent
 To bear me from the land.

LUCY H. HOOPER.

BRUTE WAR

(*"Ouvrière sans yeux."*)

TOILER sans eyes, dull-brained Penelope,
 Cradler of chaos, powerless to create,
War, whom the clash of iron fires to glee,
 The furious blast of clarions makes elate,—
Quaffer of blood, foul hag that to thy feast
 Lur'st men and madden'st them with vile delight,—
Cloud, swollen with thunder North, South, West and East,
 Fulfilled with rage darker than darkest night,—

Vast Madness, that for swords keen lightnings wieldest,
 What is thy use, dire birth of hellish race,
 If, while thou ruinest sin, *crime* thou upbuildest,
 Setting the monster i' the beast's pride of place;
 If with thine awful darkness thou dost smother
 One Emperor, but to yield earth thence another?

N. R. T.

MOURNING

(*"Charle! ô mon fils!"*)

CHARLES, Charles, my son! hast thou, then, quitted me?
 Must all fade, nought endure?
 Hast vanished in that radiance, clear for thee,
 But still for us obscure?

My sunset lingers, boy, thy morn declines!
 Sweet mutual love we've known;
 For man, alas! plans, dreams, and smiling twines
 With others' souls his own.

He cries, "This has no end!" pursues his way.
 He soon is downward bound:
 He lives, he suffers; in his grasp one day
 Mere dust and ashes found.

I've wandered twenty years, in distant lands,
 With sore heart forced to stay:
 Why fell the blow Fate only understands!
 God took my home away.

To-day one daughter and one son remain
 Of all my goodly show:
 Well-nigh in solitude my dark hours wane;
 God takes my children now.

Linger, ye two still left me! though decays
Our nest, our hearts remain;
In gloom of death your mother silent prays,
I in this life of pain.

Martyr of Sion! holding Thee in sight,
I'll drain this cup of gall,
And scale with step resolved that dangerous height,
Which rather seems a fall.

Truth is sufficient guide; no more man needs
Than end so nobly shown.
Mourning, but brave, I march; where duty leads,
I seek the vast unknown.

MARWOOD TUCKER.

ON A BARRICADE

UPON a barricade thrown 'cross the street
Where patriot's blood with felon's stains one's feet,
Ta'en with grown men, a lad aged twelve, or less!
"Were you among them — you?" He answered: "Yes."
"Good," said the officer, "when comes your turn,
You'll be shot too." — The lad sees lightnings burn, —
Stretched 'neath the wall his comrades one by one:
Then says to the officer, "First let me run
And take this watch home to my mother, sir?"
"You want to escape?" — "No, I'll come back." — "What
fear
These brats have! Where do you live?" — "By the well,
below:
I'll return quickly if you let me go."
"Be off, young scamp!" Off went the boy. "Good
joke!"
And here from all a hearty laugh outbroke,
18

And with this laugh the dying mixed their moan.
But the laugh suddenly ceased, when, paler grown,
'Midst them the lad appeared, and breathlessly
Stood upright 'gainst the wall with: "Here am I."

Dull death was shamed; the officer said, "Be free!"

Child, I know not, in all this agony
Where good and ill as with one blast of hell
Are blent, *thy* part, but this I know right well,
That thy young soul's a hero-soul sublime.
Gentle and brave, thou trod'st, despite all crime,
Two steps,—one toward thy mother, one toward death.
For the child's deeds the grown man answereth;
No fault was thine to march where others led.
But glorious aye that child who chose instead
Of flight that lured to life, love, freedom, May,
The sombre wall 'neath which slain comrades lay!
Glory on thy young brow imprints her kiss.
In Hellas old, sweetheart, thou hadst, y-wis,
After some deathless fight to win or save,
Been hailed by comrades bravest of the brave;—
Hadst smiling in the holiest ranks been found,
Haply by some Æschylean verse bright-crowned!
On brazen disks thy name had been engraven;—
One of those godlike youths who, 'neath blue heaven,
Passing some well whereo'er the willow droops
What time some virgin 'neath her pitcher stoops
Brimmed for her herds athirst, brings to her eyes
A long long look of awed yet sweet surmise.

N. R. T.

TO HIS ORPHAN GRANDCHILDREN

(*"O Charles, je te sens près de moi."*)

I **FEEL** thy presence, Charles. Sweet martyr! down
In earth, where men decay,
I search, and see from cracks which rend thy tomb,
Burst out pale morning's ray.

Close linked are bier and cradle: here the dead,
To charm us, live again:
Kneeling, I mourn, when on my threshold sounds
Two little children's strain.

George, Jeanne, sing on! George, Jeanne, unconscious
play!
Your father's form recall,
Now darkened by his sombre shade, now guilt
By beams that wandering fall.

Oh, knowledge! what thy use? did we not know
Death holds no more the dead;
But Heaven, where, hand in hand, angel and star
Smile at the grave we dread?

A Heaven, which childhood represents on earth.
Orphans, may God be nigh!
That God, who can your bright steps turn aside
From darkness, where I sigh.

All joy be yours, though sorrow bows me down!
To each his fitting wage:
Children, I've passed life's span, and men are plagued
By shadows at that stage.

Hath any done — nay, only half performed —
 The good he might for others?
Hath any conquered hatred, or had strength
 To treat his foes like brothers?

E'en he, who's tried his best, hath evil wrought:
 Pain springs from happiness:
My heart has triumphed in defeat, my pulse
 Ne'er quickened at success.

I seemed the greater when I felt the blow:
 The prick gives sense of gain;
Since to make others bleed my courage fails,
 I'd rather bear the pain.

To grow is sad, since evils grow no less;
 Great height is mark for all:
The more I have of branches, more of clustering boughs,
 The ghastlier shadows fall.

Thence comes my sadness, though I grant your charms:
 Ye are the outbursting
Of the soul in bloom, steeped in the draughts
 Of nature's boundless spring.

George is the sapling, set in mournful soil;
 Jeanne's folding petals shroud
A mind which trembles at our uproar, yet
 Half longs to speak aloud.

Give, then, my children — lowly, blushing plants,
 Whom sorrow waits to seize —
Free course to instincts, whispering 'mid the flowers,
 Like hum of murmuring bees.

Some day you'll find that chaos comes, alas!
 That angry lightning's hurled,
When any cheer the People, Atlas huge,
 Grim bearer of the world!

You'll see that, since our fate is ruled by chance,
Each man, unknowing, great,
Should frame life so, that at some future hour
Fact and his dreamings meet.

I, too, when death is past, one day shall grasp
That end I know not now;
And over you will bend me down, all filled
With dawn's mysterious glow.

I'll learn what means this exile, what this shroud
Enveloping your prime;
And why the truth and sweetness of one man
Seem to all others crime.

I'll hear — though midst these dismal boughs you sang —
How came it, that for me,
Who every pity feel for every woe,
So vast a gloom could be.

I'll know why night relentless holds me, why
So great a pile of doom:
Why endless frost enfolds me, and methinks
My nightly bed's a tomb:

Why all these battles, all these tears, regrets,
And sorrows were my share;
And why God's will of me a cypress made,
When roses bright ye were.

MARWOOD TUCKER.

TO THE CANNON "VICTOR HUGO"

[Bought with the proceeds of Readings of "Les Châtiments" during
the Siege of Paris.]

THOU deadly crater, moulded by my muse,
Cast thou thy bronze into my bowed and wounded heart,
And let my soul its vengeance to thy bronze impart!

L'ART D'ETRE GRAND PERE.—1877

THE EPIC OF THE LION

(“ *Un lion avait pris un enfant.*”)

I.

A LION in his jaws caught up a child —
Not harming it — and to the woodland, wild
With secret streams and lairs, bore off his prey;
The beast, as one might cull a flower in May,
Had plucked this bud, not thinking wrong or right,
Mumbling its stalk, too proud or kind to bite,—
A lion's way, roughly compassionate.
Yet truly dismal was the victim's fate;
Thrust in a cave that rumbled with each roar,
His food wild herbs, his bed the earthly floor,
He lived, half-dead with daily frightening.
It was a rosy boy, son of a king;
A ten-year lad with bright eyes shining wide,
And save this son his majesty beside
Had but one girl — two years of age — and so
The monarch suffered, being old, much woe,
His heir the monster's prey, while the whole land
In dread both of the beast and king did stand;
Sore terrified were all: —

By came a Knight
That road, who halted, asking “What's the fright?”
They told him, and he spurred straight for the den:

Oh, such a place; the sunlight entering in
 Grew pale and crept, so grim a sight was shown
 Where the gaunt Lion on the rock lay prone:
 The wood, at this part thick of growth and wet,
 Barred out the sky with black trunks closely set;
 Forest and forester matched wondrous well!
 Great stones stood near, with ancient tales to tell —
 Such as make moorlands weird in Brittany —
 And at its edge a mountain you might see,
 One of those iron walls which shut off heaven;
 The Lion's den was a deep cavern driven
 Into the granite ridge, fenced round with oaks:
 Cities and caverns are discordant folks,
 They bear each other grudges! this did wave
 A leafy threat to trespasser,—“Hence, knave!
 Or meet my Lion!”

In the champion went.

The den had all the sombre sentiment
 Which palaces display — deaths — murderings —
 Terrors — you felt “here lives one of the kings:”
 Bones strewn around showed that this mighty lord
 Denied himself nought which his woods afford.
 A rock-rift pierced by stroke of lightning gave
 Such misty glimmer as a den need have:
 What eagles might think dawn and owls the dusk
 Makes day enough for kings of claw and tusk.
 All else was regal, though! you understood
 Why the majestic brute slept, as he should,
 On leaves, with no lace curtains to his bed;
 And how his wine was blood — nay, or instead,
 Spring-water lapped *sans* napkin, spoon, or cup,
 Or lackeys:—

Being from spur to crest mailed up,

The champion enters.

In the den he spies

Truly a Mighty One! Crowned to the eyes

With shaggy golden fell — the Beast! — it muses
With look infallible; for, if he chooses,
The master of a wood may play at Pope,
And this one had such claws, there was small hope
To argue with him on a point of creed!
The Knight approached — yet not too fast, indeed;
His footfall clanged, flaunted his rose-red feather,
None the more notice took the Beast of either,
Still in his own reflections plunged profound;
Theseus a-marching upon that black ground
Of Sisyphus, Ixion, and dire hell,
Saw such a scene, murk and implacable:
But duty whispered “Forward!” so the Knight
Drew out his sword: the Lion at that sight
Lifted his head in slow wise, grim to see;

The Knight said: “Greeting! monstrous brute! to thee;
In this foul hole thou hast a child in keeping,—
I search its noisome nooks with glances sweeping
But spy him not. That child I must reclaim,
Friends are we if thou renderest up the same;
If not — I too am lion, thou wilt find;
The king his lost son in his arms shall bind;
While here thy wicked blood runs, smoking-hot,
Before another dawn.”

“I fancy not,”

Pensive the Lion said.

The Knight strode near,
Brandished his blade and cried: “Sire! have a care!”
The Beast was seen to smile — ominous sight! —
Never make lions smile! Then joined they fight,
The man and monster, in most desperate duel,
Like warring giants, angry, huge, and cruel;
Like tigers crimsoning an Indian wood,
The man with steel, the beast with claws as good;
Fang against falchion, hide to mail, that lord

Hurled himself foaming on the flashing sword:
 Stout though the Knight, the Lion stronger was,
 And tore that brave breast under its cuirass,
 And striking blow on blow with ponderous paw,
 Forced plate and rivet off, until you saw
 Through all the armour's cracks the bright blood spirt,
 As when clenched fingers make a mulberry squirt;
 And piece by piece he stripped the iron sheath,
 Helm, armlets, greaves — gnawed bare the bones beneath
 Scrunching that hero, till he sprawled — alas!
 Beneath his shield, all blood, and mud, and mess:
 Whereat the Lion feasted: — then it went
 Back to its rocky couch and slept content.

II.

Next came a hermit:

He found out the cave;
 With girdle, gown, and cross — trembling and grave —
 He entered. There that Knight lay, out of shape,
 Mere pulp: the Lion waking up did gape,
 Opened his yellow orbs, heard some one grope,
 And — seeing the woollen coat bound with a rope,
 A black peaked cowl, and inside that a man —
 He finished yawning and to growl began:
 Then, with a voice like prison-gates which creak,
 Roared, "What would'st thou?"

"My King"

"King?"

"May I speak?"

"Of whom?"

"The Prince."

"Is that what makes a King?"

The monk bowed reverence, "Majesty! I bring
 A message — wherefore keep this child?"

"For that

Whene'er it rains I've some one here to chat."

"Return him."

"Not so."

"What then wilt thou do?"

Would'st eat him?"

"Ay — if I have naught to chew!"

"Sire! think upon His Majesty in woe!"

"They killed my dam," the Beast said, "long ago."

"Bethink thee, sire, a king implores a king."

"Nonsense — he talks — he's man! when my notes ring
A Lion's heard!"

"His only boy!"

"Well, well!"

He hath a daughter."

"She's no heir."

"I dwell

Alone in this my home, 'mid wood and rock,
Thunder my music, and the lightning-shock
My lamp; — let his content him."

"Ah! show pity."

"What means that word? is't current in your city?"

"Lion thou'dst wish to go to heaven — see here!"

I offer thee indulgence, and, writ clear,
God's passport to His paradise!"

"Get forth,

Thou holy rogue," thundered the Beast in wrath:
The hermit disappeared.

III.

Thereat left free,

Full of a lion's vast serenity
He slept again, leaving still night to pass:
The moon rose, starting spectres on the grass,
Shrouding the marsh with mist, blotting the ways,
And melting the black woodland to grey maze;
No stir was seen below, above no motion
Save of the white stars trooping to the ocean:
And while the mole and cricket in the brake

Kept watch, the Lion's measured breath did make
 Slow symphony that kept all creatures calm.
 Sudden — loud cries and clamours! striking qualm
 Into the heart of the quiet, horn and shout
 Causing the solemn wood to reel with rout,
 And all the nymphs to tremble in their trees.
 The uproars of a midnight chase are these
 Which shakes the shades, the marsh, mountain and stream,
 And breaks the silence of their sombre dream.
 The thicket flashed with many a lurid spark
 Of torches borne 'mid wild cries through the dark;
 Hounds, nose to earth, ran yelping through the wood,
 And armed groups, gathering in the alleys, stood.
 Terrific was the noise that rolled before;
 It seemed a squadron; nay, 'twas something more —
 A whole battalion, sent by that sad king
 With force of arms his little Prince to bring,
 Together with the Lion's bleeding hide.

Which here was right or wrong? who can decide?
 Have beasts or men most claim to live? God wots!
 He is the unit, we the cypher-dots.

Well warmed with meat and drink those soldiers were,
 Good hearts they bore — and many a bow and spear;
 Their number large, and by a captain led
 Valiant, whilst some in foreign wars had bled,
 And all were men approved and firm in fight;
 The Lion heard their cries, affronting night,
 For by this time his awful lids were lifted;
 But from the rock his chin he never shifted,
 And only his great tail wagged to and fro.

Meantime, outside the cavern, startled so,
 Came close the uproar of this shouting crowd.
 As round a web flies buzzing in a cloud,
 Or hive-bees swarming o'er a bear ensnared,

This hunter's legion buzzed, and swarmed, and flared.
In battle order all their ranks were set:
'Twas understood the Beast they came to get,
Fierce as a tiger's cunning — strong to seize —
Could munch up heroes as an ape cracks fleas,
Could with one glance make Jove's own bird look down;
Wherefore they laid him siege as to a town.
The pioneers with axes cleared the way,
The spearmen followed in a close array,
The archers held their arrows on the string;
Silence was bid, lest any chattering
Should mask the Lion's footstep in the wood;
The dogs — who know the moment when 'tis good
To hold their peace — went first, nose to the ground,
Giving no tongue; the torches all around
Hither and thither flickered, their long beams
Through sighing foliage sending ruddy gleams; —
Such is the order a great hunt should have:
And soon between the trunks they spy the cave,
A black, dim-outlined hole, deep in the gloom,
Gaping, but blank and silent as the tomb,
Wide open to the night, as though it feared
As little all that clamour as it heard.
There's smoke where fire smoulders, and a town,
When men lay siege, rings tocsin up and down;
Nothing so here! therefore with vague dismay
Each stood, and grasp on bow or blade did lay,
Watching the sombre stillness of that chasm:
The dogs among themselves whimpered: a spasm
From the horror lurking in all voiceless places —
Worse than the rage of tempests — blanched all faces:
Yet they were there to find and fight this Thing,
So they advance, each bush examining,
Dreading full sore the very prey they sought;
The pioneers held high the lamps they brought:
"There! that is it! the very mouth of the den!"
The trees all round it muttered, warning men:

Still they kept step and neared it — look you now,
 Company's pleasant, and there were a thou —
 Good Lord! all in a moment, there's its face!
 Frightful! — they saw the Lion! Not one pace
 Further stirred any man; the very trees
 Grew blacker with his presence, and the breeze
 Blew shudders into all hearts present there:
 Yet, whether 'twas from valour or wild fear,
 The archers drew — and arrow, bolt, and dart
 Made target of the Beast. He, on his part —
 As calm as Pelion in the rain or hail —
 Bristled majestic from the nose to tail,
 And shook full fifty missiles from his hide;
 Yet any meaner brute had found beside
 Enough still sticking fast to make him yell
 Or fly; the blood was trickling down his fell,
 But no heed took he, glaring steadfastly;
 And all those men of war, amazed to be
 Thus met by so stupendous might and pride,
 Thought him no beast, but some god brutified.
 The hounds, tail down, slunk back behind the spears;
 And then the Lion, 'mid the silence, rears
 His awful face, and over wood and marsh
 Roared a vast roar, hoarse, vibrant, vengeful, harsh,—
 A rolling, raging peal of wrath, which spread
 From the quaking earth to the echoing vault o'erhead,
 Making the half-awakened thunder cry
 "Who thunders there?" from its black bed of sky.

This ended all! — sheer horror cleared the coast:
 As fogs are driven by wind, that valorous host
 Melted, dispersed to all the quarters four,
 Clean panic-stricken by that monstrous roar;
 Each with one impulse — leaders, rank and file,
 Deeming it haunted ground, where Earth somehow
 Is wont to breed marvels of lawless might —
 They scampered, mad, blind, reckless, wild with fright.
 Then quoth the Lion, "Woods and mountains! see,

A thousand men enslaved fear one Beast free!"
As lava to volcanoes, so a roar
Is to these creatures; and, the eruption o'er
In heaven-shaking wrath, they mostly calm.
The gods themselves to lions yield the palm
For magnanimity. When Jove was king,
Hercules said, "Let's finish off the thing,
Not the Nemaean merely; every one
We'll strangle — all the lions." Whereupon
The lions yawned a "much obliged!" his way.

But this Beast, being whelped by night, not day —
Offspring of glooms — was sterner; one of those
Who go down slowly when their storm's at close;
His anger had a savage ground-swell in it:
He loved to take his naps, too, to the minute,
And to be roused up thus with horn and hound,—
To find an ambush sprung — to be hemmed round —
Targetted — 'twas an insult to his grove!
He paced towards the hill, climbed high above,
Lifted his voice, and, as the sowers sow
The seeds down wind, thus did that Lion throw
His message far enough the town to reach.

"King! your behaviour really passes speech!
Thus far no harm I've wrought to him your son;
But now I give you notice — when night's done
I will make entry at your city-gate,
Bringing the Prince alive; and those who wait
To see him in my jaws — your lackey-crew —
Shall see me eat him in your palace too!"

Quiet the night passed, while the streamlets bubbled,
And the clouds sailed across the vault untroubled.

Next morning this is what was viewed in town:

Dawn coming — people going — some adown
Praying, some crying; pallid cheeks, swift feet,
And a huge Lion stalking through the street.

IV.

The quaking townsmen in the cellars hid;
 How make resistance? briefly, no one did;
 The soldiers left their posts, the gates stood wide;
 'Twas felt the Lion had upon his side
 A majesty so godlike, such an air —
 That den, too, was so dark and grim a lair —
 It seemed scarce short of rash impiety
 To cross its path as the fierce Beast went by.
 So to the palace and its gilded dome
 With stately steps unchallenged did he roam,
 In many a spot with those vile darts scarred still,
 As you may note an oak scored with the bill,
 Yet nothing recks that giant-trunk; so here
 Paced this proud wounded Lion, free of fear,
 While all the people held aloof in dread,
 Seeing the scarlet jaws of that great head
 Hold up the princely boy — aswoon.

Is't true

Princes are flesh and blood? Ah, yes! and you
 Had wept with sacred pity, seeing him
 Swing in the Lion's mouth, body and limb:
 The tender captive gripped by those grim fangs,
 On either side the jowl helplessly hangs,
 Deathlike, albeit he bore no wound of tooth.
 And for the brute thus gagged it was, in sooth,
 A grievous thing to wish to roar, yet be
 Muzzled and dumb, so he walked savagely,
 His pent heart blazing through his burning eyes,
 While not one bow is stretched, no arrow flies;
 They dreaded, peradventure, lest some shaft
 Shot with a trembling hand and faltering craft
 Might miss the Beast and pierce the Prince:

So, still

As he had promised, roaring from his hill,
 This Lion, scorning town and townfolk sick
 To view such terror, goes on straight and quick

To the King's house, hoping to meet there **one**
Who dares to speak with him: — outside is none!
The door's ajar, and flaps with every blast;
He enters it — within those walls at last! —
No man!

For, certes, though he raged and wept,
His Majesty, like all, close shelter kept,
Solicitous to live, holding his breath
Specially precious to the realm: now death
Is not thus viewed by honest beasts of prey,
And when the Lion found *him* fled away,
Ashamed to be so grand, man being so base,
He muttered to himself in that dark place
Where lions keep their thoughts: "This wretched King!
'Tis well, I'll eat his boy!" Then, wandering,
Lordly he traversed courts and corridors,
Paced beneath vaults of gold on shining floors,
Glanced at the throne deserted, stalked from hall
To hall — green, yellow, crimson — empty all!
Rich couches void, soft seats unoccupied!
And as he walked he looked from side to side
To find some pleasant nook for his repast,
Since appetite was come to munch at last
The princely morsel: — Ah! what sight astounds
That grisly lounge?

In the palace grounds
An alcove on a garden gives, and there
A tiny thing — forgot in the general fear,
Lulled in the flower-sweet dreams of infancy,
Bathed with soft sunlight falling brokenly
Through leaf and lattice — was that moment waking;
A little lovely maid, most dear and taking,
The Prince's sister; all alone — undressed —
She sate up singing: children sing so best.

A voice of joy, than silver lute-string softer!
A mouth all rose-bud, blossoming in laughter!

A baby-angel hard at play! a dream
 Of Bethlehem's cradle, or what nests would seem
 If girls were hatched! — all these! Eyes, too, so blue
 That sea and sky might own their sapphire new!
 Neck bare, arms bare, **pink** legs and stomach bare!
 Nought hid the roseate satin skin, save where
 A little white-laced shift was fastened free;
 She looked as fresh, singing thus peacefully,
 As stars at twilight or as April's heaven;
 A floweret — you had said — divinely given,
 To show on earth how God's own lilies grow;
 Such was this beauteous baby-maid; and so
 The Beast caught sight of her and stopped —

And then
 Entered: — the floor creaked as he stalked straight in.

Above the playthings by the little bed
 The Lion put his shaggy massive head,
 Dreadful with savage might and lordly scorn,
 More dreadful with that princely prey so borne;
 Which she, quick spying, "Brother! brother!" cried,
 "Oh, my own brother!" and, untterrified —
 Looking a living rose that made the place
 Brighter and warmer with its fearless grace —
 She gazed upon that monster of the wood,
 Whose yellow balls not Typhon had withstood.
 And — well! who knows what thoughts these small heads
 hold?

She rose up in her cot — full height, and bold,
 And shook her pink fist angrily at him.
 Whereon — close to the little bed's white rim,
 All dainty silk and laces — this huge Brute
 Set down her brother gently at her foot,
 Just as a mother might, and said to her —
 "*Don't be put out, now! there he is, Dear! — there!*"

EDWIN ARNOLD, C.S.I.

LES QUATRE VENTS DE L'ESPRIT.—1881

NEAR AVRANCHES

(“ *La nuit morne tombait.*”)

ON ocean mournful, vast, fell the vast mournful night.

The darkling wind awoke, and urged to hurried
flight,
Athwart the granite-crag, above the granite-crests,
Some sails unto their haven, some birds unto their nests.

Sad unto death, I gazed on all the world around.
Oh! how yon sea is vast and the soul of man profound!

Afar St. Michael towered, the wan salt waves amid,
Huge Cheops of the west, the ocean-pyramid.

On Egypt, home of fathomless mysteries, did I brood,
Its sandy desert's grand eternal solitude,
All-darkling camp of kings ne'er stirred by battle-breath,
Planted for aye i' the sombre stricken field of death.

Alas! In even these spots where widest-winged doth rove
God's breath, supreme in wrath, omnipotent in love,
To erect against high heaven what hath been man's sole
care? —

Lo, here a prison frowns, and there a sepulchre!

N. R. T.

MY HAPPIEST DREAM

(*"J'aime à me figurer."*)

I LOVE to watch in fancy, to some soft dreamy strain
 A choir of lovely virgins issuing angel-calm,
 Veiled all in white, at even, from some old shadowy fane;
 In hand — a palm!

A dream which in my darkest hours doth aye beguile
 Is this: a group of children, ere they seek repose,
 Merrily dancing; on each rosebud mouth a smile,
 Each brow — a rose!

Haply a dream yet sweeter, that yields yet more delight,
 Is of a radiant girl, who, betwixt joy and fear,
 Dreameth of Love, not knowing, beneath God's stars love-
 bright;
 In eye — a tear!

Another vision which doth lend my sorrow ease:
 Lo, Marguerite and Jeanne, like birds at evening
 Flitting across the lawn, across the shadowy leas;
 Each foot — a wing!

But of all dreams whereon I gaze with pensive eyes,
This to my poet-soul most pleasure doth afford:
 A tyrant stretched beneath God's awful starlit skies;
 In heart — a sword!

A sword; but never a dagger! Poet, thy right
 Is, 'neath the broad blue sky, a fair free fight,
 Where, face to face, and foot to foot, and breast
 To breast, thou stand'st,— and leav'st to God the rest.

Thou Justice' champion, (*he*, the chos'n of hell!)
 In the sun's eye cross falchions, and smite well;
 Thy sword-clash ringing true as even thy song.
 So, if yet once again Right fall 'neath Wrong,
 Right's Warrior, mingling with death's shadowy bands,
 Find Bayard and the Cid with outstretched hands.

N. R. T.

ON HEARING THE PRINCESS ROYAL¹ SING

(*" Dans ta haute demeure."*)

In thine abode so high
 Where yet one scarce can breathe,
 Dear child, most tenderly
 A soft song thou dost wreath.

Thou singest, little girl —
 Thy sire, the King is he:
 Around thee glories whirl,
 But all things sigh in thee.

Thy thought may seek not wings
 Of speech; dear love's forbidden;
 Thy smiles, those heavenly things,
 Being faintly born, are chidden.

Thou feel'st, poor little Bride,
 A hand unknown and chill
 Clasp thine from out the wide
 Deep shade so deathly still.

Thy sad heart, wingless, weak,
 Is sunk in this black shade

¹ Marie, daughter of King Louis Philippe, afterwards Princess of Wurtemberg.

So deep, thy small hands seek,
Vainly, the pulse God made.

Thou art yet but highness, thou
That shalt be majesty:
Though still on thy fair brow
Some faint dawn-flush may be,

Child, unto armies dear,
Even now we mark heaven's light
Dimmed with the fume and fear
And glory of battle-might.

Thy godfather is he,
Earth's Pope,— he hails thee, child!
Passing, armed men you see
Like unarmed women, mild.

As saint all worship thee;
Thyself even hast the strong
Thrill of divinity
Mingled with thy small song.

Each grand old warrior
Guards thee, submissive, proud;
Mute thunders at thy door
Sleep, that shall wake most loud.

Around thee foams the wild
Bright sea, the lot of kings.
Happier wert thou, my child,
I' the woods a bird that sings!

N. R. T.

AN OLD-TIME LAY

(“*Jamais elle ne raille.*”)

NEVER sigh or tear
Irks this happy fay;
But she laugheth aye.—

There are wisps of straw, while mossy twigs are here:
Reed-warbler, breeze-blest,
Build on the waves thy nest.

Beneath beams most fair
Of thine eyes so bright
Passing, what delight!—

Here are mossy twigs, while wisps of straw are there:
Swallow sweet, sun-blest,
Build 'neath mine eaves thy nest.

May drinks April's tear,
While her azure eyes
Wake birds' blithest cries.—

Here is *her* sweet smile, her blush yet sweeter, here —
Happy Love, thus blest,
Build in my heart thy nest!

N. R. T.

JERSEY

(“*Jersey dort dans les flots.*”)

JERSEY, lulled by the waves' eternal chime,
Sleeps; in her smallness being twice sublime;
A rocky mountain,—born amid blue sea.
Old England northward, southward Normandy,
Our sweet she is, and in her summer-trance
Hath the bright smiles, and oft the tears, of France.

For the third time now her flowers and fruits I've seen.
 O land of Exile, little island queen,
 Be blest of me as by thy billows blest!
 This small bright nook where the tired soul finds rest,
 If 'twere my country, were my haven of life.
 Here, as some mariner from sea-stormy strife
 Rescued, I'd dwell, and suffer with delight
 The sun shine all my darkling soul snow-white
 Like yonder linen bleaching on the grass.

Musing profoundly seems each rocky mass;
 Within whose hollow caverns waves forever
 Gurgle and sob. When evening falleth, shiver
 The trees, weird sibyls with the wind for wail;
 While the huge cromlech, like a spectre pale,
 Towers on the hill, till 'neath the wan moon-ray
 It turns to Moloch grinning o'er his prey.

Along the beach, when blow the strong west-winds,
 In every craggy corner where one finds
 Frail fisher-huts, across the thatch that slopes
 Seaward, are stretched stone-weighted briny ropes,
 Lest by the blast the roof be torn away.
 With bosom bare, some old-world ocean-lay
 Each mother to her sailor babe doth drawl,
 What time from out the surf a boat they haul;—
 While laugh the meadows.

Hail, O sacred Isle,

That brightliest to heaven's rosiest dawn dost smile!
 Hail beacons, stars by fisher-folk best blest!
 Old mossy church-towers where blithe swallows nest!
 Poor altars rudely carved by fishermen!
 Elm-shadowed roads where creaks the heavy wain;
 Gardens bright-flushed with flowers of every dye;
 Streams with blue sea for goal, dreams with blue sky,—
 All hail!

On the horizon wings snow-white
 Of vessels; nearer shore the sea-mews' flight,—

Old Ocean's fearless wave-delighting flock!
 Lo, Venus smiling on each storm-scarred rock,
 What time,— to song of birds and billows born,—
 She gives to heaven the rosy-dimpled Morn.

O heather on the hills! foam on the waves!
 Cybele's crumbling palace ocean laves!
 Rough mountain soothed by ocean melodies!
 Lowing of kine! Sweet slumber beneath trees!

The island seems immersed in voiceless prayer,
 Not to be turned therefrom, though ocean, air,
 Around her blend their vast defiant chaunts.
 The cloud weeps, passing; lo, the rock that vaunts
 Upon its spur how many a brave ship riven,
 Keeps on its crest for the bird a little dew of heaven!

N. R. T.

THEN, MOST, I SMILE

(*" Il est un peu tard."*)

It is a little late to smile so bright,
 Queen Marguerite; wait in thy field awhile,
 And the green grass with hoarfrost shall be white.
 — Pilgrim, cold winter comes,— still must I smile.

It is a little late to smile so bright,
 Sweet Star of eve; wait in thy heaven awhile,
 Soon will all roseate rays be lost in night.
 — Pilgrim, night comes,— still brighter shall I smile.

It is a little late to smile so bright,
 Proud soul of mine; wait in thy woe awhile,
 And one shall stay thy strong wings' heavenward flight.
 — Pilgrim, Death comes,— forever shall I smile!

N. R. T.

CROMWELL AND THE CROWN

("Ah! je le tiens enfin.")

[CROMWELL, Act II., Oct. 1827.]

THURLOW *communicates the intention of Parliament to offer CROMWELL the crown.*

CROMWELL. And is it mine? And have my feet at length
Attained the summit of the rock i' the sand?

THURLOW. And yet, my lord, you have long reigned.

CROM. Nay, nay!

Power I have 'joyed, in sooth, but not the name.
Thou smilest, Thurlow. Ah, thou little know'st
What hole it is Ambition digs i' th' heart!
What end, most seeming empty, is the mark
For which we fret and toil and dare! How hard
With an unrounded fortune to sit down!
Then, what a lustre from most ancient times
Heaven has flung o'er the sacred head of kings!
King — Majesty — what names of power! No king,
And yet the world's high arbiter! The thing
Without the word! no handle to the blade!
Away — the empire and the name are one!
Alack! thou little dream'st how grievous 'tis,
Emerging from the crowd, and at the top
Arrived, to feel that there is *something* still
Above our heads; something, nothing! no matter —
That word is everything.

LEITCH RITCHIE.

MILTON'S APPEAL TO CROMWELL

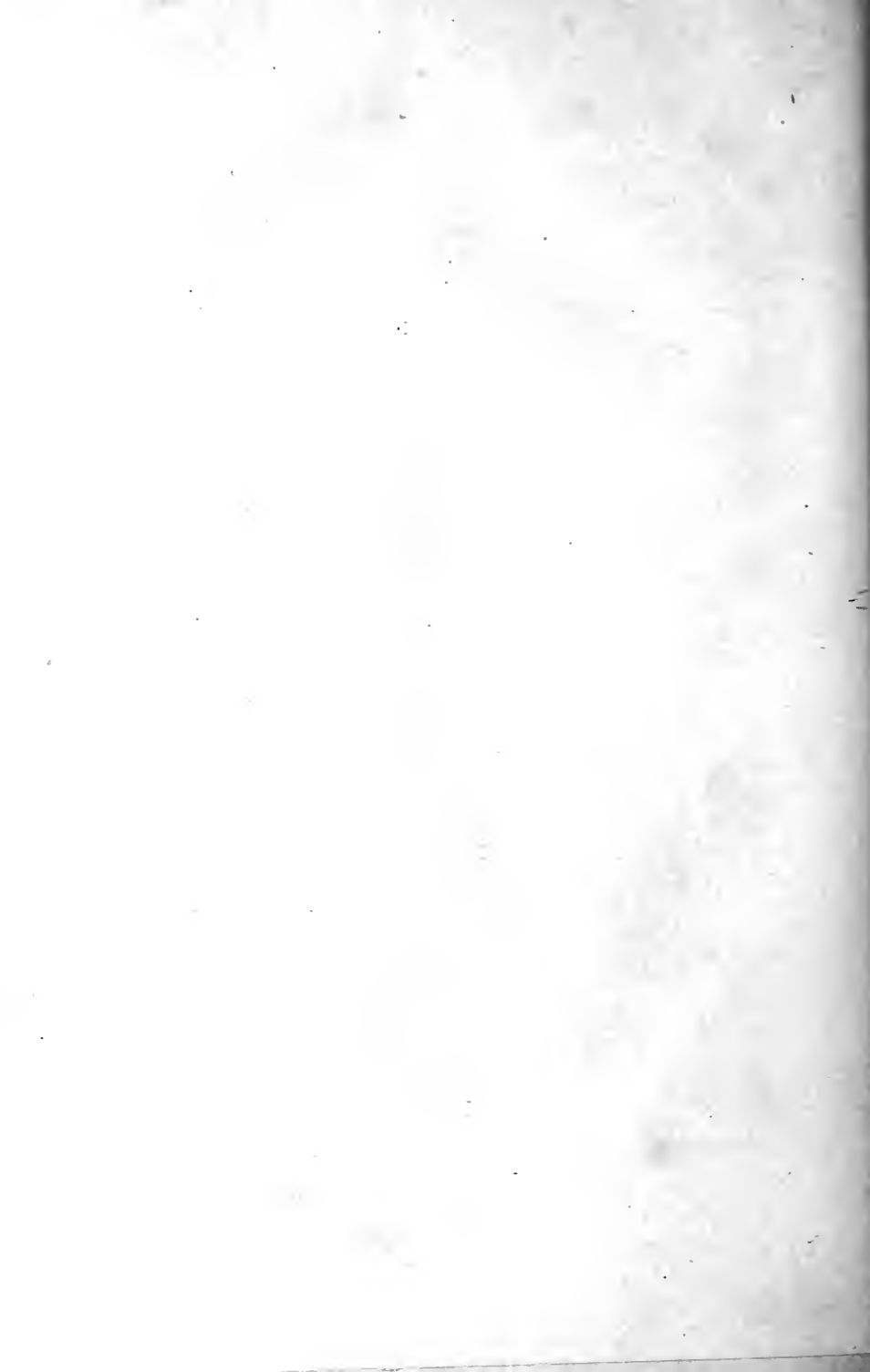
(*"Non! je n'y puis tenir."*)

[CROMWELL, Act III., sc. iv.]

STAY! I no longer can contain myself,
 But cry you: Look on John, who bares his mind
 To Oliver — to Cromwell, Milton speaks!
 Despite a kindling eye and marvel deep
 A voice is lifted up without your leave;
 For I was never placed at council board
 To speak *my* promptings. When awed strangers come
 Who've seen Fox-Mazarin wince at the stings
 In my epistles — and bring admiring votes
 Of learned colleges, they strain to see
 My figure in the glare — the usher utters,
 "Behold and hearken! that's my Lord Protector's
 Cousin — that, his son-in-law — that next" — who cares?
 Some perfumed puppet! "Milton?" "He in black —
 Yon silent scribe who trims their eloquence!"
 Still 'chronicling small-beer' — such is my duty!
 Yea, one whose thunder roared through martyr bones
 Till Pope and Louis Grand quaked on their thrones,
 And echoed "Vengeance for the Vaudois," where
 The Sultan slumbers sick with scent of roses.
 He is but the mute in this seraglio —
 "Pure" Cromwell's Council!
 But to be dumb and blind is overmuch!
 Impatient Issachar kicks at the load!
 Yet diadems are burdens painfuller,
 And I would spare thee that sore imposition.
 Dear brother Noll, I plead against thyself!
 Thou aim'st to be a king; and, in thine heart,
 What fool has said: "There is no king but thou?"



"Stay! I no longer can contain myself
But cry you: Look on John, who bares his mind
To Oliver—to Cromwell, Milton speaks!"
Poems: Milton's Appeal to Cromwell. Page 298.



For thee the multitude waged war and won —
 The end thou art of wrestlings and of prayer,
 Of sleepless watch, long marches, hunger, tears
 And blood prolifically spilled, homes lordless,
 And homeless lords! The mass must always suffer
 That one should reign! the collar's but newly clamp'd,
 And nothing but the name thereon is changed —
 Master? still masters! mark you not the red
 Of shame unutterable in my sightless white?
 Still hear me, Cromwell, speaking for your sake!
 These fifteen years, we, to you whole-devoted,
 Have sought for Liberty — to give it thee?
 To make our interests your huckster gains?
 The king a lion slain that you may flay,
 And wear the robe — well, worthily — I say't,
 For I will not abase my brother!
 No! I would keep him in the realm serene,
 My own ideal of heroes! loved o'er Israel,
 And higher placed by me than all the others!
 And such, for tinkling titles, hollow haloes
 Like that around yon painted brow — thou! thou!
 Apostle, hero, saint — dishonour thyself!
 And snip and trim the flag of Naseby-field
 As scarf on which the maid-of-honour's dog
 Will yelp, some summer afternoon! That sword
 Shrink into a sceptre! brilliant bauble! Thou,
 Thrown on a lonely rock in storm of state,
 Brain-turned by safety's miracle, thou risest
 Upon the tott'ring stone whilst ocean ebbs,
 And, recking of no storms to come to-morrow,
 Or to-morrow — deem that a certain pedestal
 Whereon thou'lt be adored for e'er — e'en while
 It shakes — o'ersets the rider! Tremble, thou!
 For he who dazzles, makes men Samson-blind,
 Will see the pillars of his palace kiss
 E'en at the whelming ruin! Then, what word
 Of answer from your wreck when I demand

Account of Cromwell! glory of the people
Smothered in ashes! through the dust thou'lt hear:
"What didst thou with thy virtue?" Will it respond:
"When battered helm is doffed, how soft is purple
On which to lay the head, lulled by the praise
Of thousand fluttering fans of flatterers!
Wearied of war-horse, gratefully one glides
In gilded barge, or in crowned, velvet car,
From gay Whitehall to gloomy Temple Bar —"
(Where — had you slept, that head were bleaching now!
And that same rabble, splitting for a hedge,
Had joined their rows to cheer the active herdsman;
Perchance, in mockery, they'd gird the skull
With a hop-leaf crown! Bitter the brewing, Noll!)
Are crowns the end-all of ambition? Remember
Charles Stuart! and that they who make can break!
This same Whitehall may black its front with crape,
And this broad window be the portal twice
To lead upon a scaffold! Frown! or laugh!
Laugh on as they did at Cassandra's speech!
But mark — the prophetess was right! Still laugh,
Like the credulous Ethiop in his faith in stars!
But give one thought to Stuart, two for yourself!
In his appointed hour, all was forthcoming —
Judge, axe, and deathsman veiled! and my poor eyes
Descry — as would thou saw'st! — a figure veiled,
Uplooming there — afar, like sunrise, coming!
With blade that ne'er spared Judas 'midst free brethren!
Stretch not the hand of Cromwell for the prize
Meant not for him, nor his! Thou growest old,
The people are ever young! Like her i' the chase
Who drave a dart into her lover, embowered,
Piercing the incense-clouds, the popular shaft
May slay thee in a random shot at Tyranny!
Man, friend, remain a Cromwell! in thy name,
Rule! and if thy son be worthy, he and his,
So rule the rest for ages! be it grander thus

To be a Cromwell than a Carolus.
 No lapdog combed by wantons, but the watch
 Upon the freedom that we won! Dismiss
 Your flatterers — let no harpings, no gay songs
 Prevent your calm dictation of good laws
 To guard, to fortify, and keep enlinked
 England and Freedom! Be thine old self alone!
 And make, above all else accorded me,
 My most desired claim on all posterity,
 That thou in Milton's verse wert foremost of the free!

FIRST LOVE

(“*Vous êtes singulier.*”)

[MARION DELORME, Act I., June, 1829, played 1831,

MARION (*smiling*). You're strange, and yet I love you thus.

DIDIER.

You love me?

Beware, nor with light lips utter that word.

You love me! — know you what it is to love

With love that is the life-blood in one's veins,

The vital air we breathe, a love long-smothered,

Smouldering in silence, kindling, burning, blazing,

And purifying in its growth the soul.

A love that from the heart eats every passion

But its sole self; love without hope or limit,

Deep love that will outlast all happiness;

Speak, speak; is such the love you bear me?

MARION.

Truly.

DIDIER. Ha! but you do not know how I love you!

The day that first I saw you, the dark world

Grew shining, for your eyes lighted my gloom.

Since then, all things have changed; to me you are

Some brightest, unknown creature from the skies.

This irksome life, 'gainst which my heart rebelled,

Seems almost fair and pleasant; for alas!
 Till I knew you wandering, alone, oppressed,
 I wept and struggled, I had never loved.

FANNY KEMBLE-BUTLER.

THE FIRST BLACK FLAG

(“ *Avez-vous ouï dire?* ”)

[LES BURGRAVES, Part I., March, 1843.]

JOB. Hast thou ne'er heard men say
 That, in the Black Wood, 'twixt Cologne and Spire,
 Upon a rock flanked by the towering mountains,
 A castle stands, renowned among all castles?
 And in this fort, on piles of lava built,
 A burgrave dwells, among all burgraves famed?
 Hast heard of this wild man who laughs at laws —
 Charged with a thousand crimes — for warlike deeds
 Renowned — and placed under the Empire's ban
 By the Diet of Frankfort; by the Council
 Of Pisa banished from the Holy Church;
 Reprobate, isolated, cursed — yet still
 Unconquered 'mid his mountains and in will;
 The bitter foe of the Count Palatine
 And Treves' proud archbishop; who has spurned
 For sixty years the ladder which the Empire
 Upreared to scale his walls? Hast heard that he
 Shelters the brave — the flaunting rich man strips —
 Of master makes a slave? That here, above
 All dukes, aye, kings, eke emperors — in the eyes
 Of Germany to their fierce strife a prey,
 He rears upon his tower, in stern defiance,
 A signal of appeal to the crushed people,
 A banner vast, of Sorrow's sable hue,
 Snapped by the tempest in its whirlwind wrath,

So that kings quiver as the jades at whips?
 Hast heard, he touches now his hundredth year —
 And that, defying fate, in face of heaven,
 On his invincible peak, no force of war
 Uprooting other holds — nor powerful Cæsar —
 Nor Rome — nor age, that bows the pride of man —
 Nor aught on earth — hath vanquished, or subdued,
 Or bent this ancient Titan of the Rhine,
 The excommunicated Job?

Democratic Review.

THE SON IN OLD AGE

(“*Ma Regina, cette noble figure.*”)

[LES BURGRAVES, Part II.]

THY noble face, Regina, calls to mind,
 My poor lost little one, my latest born.
 He was a gift from God — a sign of pardon —
 That child vouchsafed me in my eightieth year!
 I to his little cradle went, and went,
 And even while 'twas sleeping, talked to it.
 For when one's very old, one is a child!
 Then took it up and placed it on my knees,
 And with both hands stroked down its soft, light hair —
 Thou wert not born then — and he would stammer
 Those pretty little sounds that make one smile!
 And though not twelve months old, he had a mind.
 He recognized me — nay, knew me right well,
 And in my face would laugh — and that child-laugh,
 Oh, poor old man! 'twas sunlight to my heart.
 I meant him for a soldier, ay, a conqueror,
 And named him George. One day — oh, bitter thought!
 The child played in the fields. When thou art mother,
 Ne'er let thy children out of sight to play!

The gipsies took him from me — oh, for what?
 Perhaps to kill him at a witch's rite.
 I weep! — now, after twenty years — I weep
 As if 'twere yesterday. I loved him so!
 I used to call him "my own little king!"
 I was intoxicated with my joy
 When o'er my white beard ran his rosy hands,
 Thrilling me all through.

Foreign Quarterly Review

THE EMPEROR'S RETURN

(" *Un bouffon manquait à cette fête.*")

[LES BURGRAVES, Part II.]

The EMPEROR FREDERICK BARBAROSSA, believed to be dead, appearing as a beggar among the Rhenish nobility at a castle, suddenly reveals himself.

HATTO. This goodly masque but lacked a fool!
 First gipsy; next a beggar; — good! Thy name?
 BARBAROSSA. Frederick of Swabia, Emperor of Almain.
 ALL. The Red Beard?

BARBAROSSA. Aye, Frederick, by my mountain birthright
 Prince

O' th' Romans, chosen king, crowned emperor,
 Heaven's sword-bearer, monarch of Burgundy
 And Arles — the tomb of Karl I dared profane,
 But have repented me on bended knees
 In penance 'midst the desert twenty years;
 My drink the rain, the rocky herbs my food,
 Myself a ghost the shepherds fled before,
 And the world named me as among the dead.
 But I have heard my country call — come forth,
 Lifted the shroud — broken the sepulchre.

This hour is one when dead men needs must rise.
 Ye own me? Ye mind me marching through these vales
 When golden spur was ringing at my heel?
 Now know me what I am, your master, earls!
 Brave knights you deem! You say, "The sons we are
 Of puissant barons and great noblemen,
 Whose honours we prolong." You *do* prolong them?
 Your sires were soldiers brave, not prowlers base,
 Rogues, miscreants, felons, village-ravagers!
 They made great wars, they rode like heroes forth,
 And, worthy, won broad lands and towers and towns,
 So firmly won that thirty years of strife
 Made of their followers dukes, their leaders kings!
 While you! like jackal and the bird of prey,
 Who lurk in copses or 'mid muddy beds —
 Crouching and hushed, with dagger ready drawn,
 Hide in the noisome marsh that skirts the way,
 Trembling lest passing hounds snuff out your lair!
 Listen at eventide on lonesome path
 For traveller's footfall, or the mule-bell's chime,
 Pouncing by hundreds on one helpless man,
 To cut him down, then back to your retreats —
 You dare to vaunt your sires? I call your sires,
 Bravest of brave and greatest 'mid the great,
 A line of warriors! you, a pack of thieves!

Athenæum.

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DRAMAS OF VICTOR HUGO

TRANSLATED BY

FREDERICK L. SLOUS

AND

MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND



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shown it. With Doña Sol her love is her "sole existence." It is because Hernani refuses when urged to subdue his master passion, vengeance, and thus be released from his pledge, that the play becomes a tragedy. Not until too late for life and happiness is his vengeance overcome by the magnanimity of Charles.

One of the admirable characteristics of this work is that all the personages portrayed are such distinct individuals that any one knowing the play tolerably well would, there is little doubt, identify any line that might be quoted, apportioning it to the right speaker. But this power of distinctly and forcibly delineating his characters is one of Hugo's never-failing attributes, and is shown hardly less in the subordinate courtiers who play their part in the drama, than in the leading personages. Don Carlos may not be quite the Charles the Fifth of history, but he is something greater — a poet's fine creation.

It seems to me that the old man, Ruy Gomez, is one of the most subtle conceptions which a great poet ever vivified. He is a man who has reached sixty years of age in the enjoyment of unsullied fame and the noblest repute — a man to whom the preservation of what was called Castilian honour was beyond all other duties, all other happiness. The scene of the Portraits must warm every noble nature to pathetic sympathy; and yet when we have finished the play we discover of how little worth was that chivalry of Spain which "Cervantes laughed away" — how completely was it a mere form — a code of set rules — not what chivalry surely ought to be, an influence springing from Christianity and capable of being adapted to all circumstances. Such was not the chivalry of Don Ruy Gomez de Silva, Duke de Pastrana, when crossed and thwarted in his heart's desire. Tempted then by furious passions he fell. There was no chivalry in his Shylock-like holding of Hernani to his bond.

I think there are two or three brief sentences in the Fifth Act, which are like flashes of lurid lightning by which we see the depths of the malignity which rages in the heart of

the old Duke — depths which it would have taken an inferior writer half a page to describe.

Perhaps, however, the finest portion of this work is the Fourth Act, which includes the magnificent monologue of Charles the Fifth before the tomb of Charlemagne. A translator must be very incompetent if his rendering of this speech does not stir the pulse of the reader who remembers that it embodies the ideas of a noble despot in the days when despotism was the only form of government. And this brings one to the point of what has often been said about Victor Hugo being untranslatable.

It cannot be denied that in a certain sense all poetry of the first order must be untranslatable. It is scarcely possible that any phrase of another language can be quite so happy as that into which the molten thought of genius first flowed. Neither is it likely, if possible, that the melody of the first inspiration can find a complete equivalent in a strange tongue. But surely the language of Shakespeare and Milton, of Pope and of Byron, and of our living Victorian poets is not so poor that it cannot express subtle thoughts precisely, eloquent pleadings with fervour, and poetical imagery with force and grace!

Shakespeare must be as untranslatable — in the sense to which I have alluded — as undoubtedly is Victor Hugo. Yet the French know something of our greatest poet even through translations. Byron also is tolerably familiar to them, not to mention lesser lights. It may seem a paradox, but I think it is only a truth, to say that the greater a poet is, the more capable are his works of translation; and for this reason. They contain the larger store of deep thought, which, like pure gold, may be put into the crucible and melted into a new shape. Smaller poets do not supply this precious substance, and so what little charm they have evaporates in the necessary treatment.

It has, I believe, been said by one or two detracting critics that Victor Hugo is, for a great writer, deficient in humour. He is generally too terribly in earnest to be turned aside to

make fun on slight provocation; but the manner in which Don Carlos, in the First Act of "Hernani," mystifies the proud Duke surely belongs to the richest vein of comedy; and of sarcasm there is abundance throughout the play.

It would occupy too much space to relate half the amusing stories associated with the first production of "Hernani." The great actress, Mdlle. Mars — though more than fifty years of age — personated the heroine to perfection; but she did not in the first instance like her part, nor did she appreciate the play until success enabled her to do so. Certainly she could not have comprehended the work in its entirety, or she would not have raised the objection she did to a certain line in the Third Act, Scene the Fourth. In her egotism she probably looked on *Hernani* as a common bandit, instead of a rebel Lord defying a King. It is a powerful scene in which *Hernani* had been lamenting that he had only a dole of misery to offer to his love, and Doña Sol exclaims:

"Vous êtes mon lion superbe et généreux!"
("You are my lion generous and superb!")

And time after time, at rehearsal, Mdlle. Mars halted at this passage, shaded her eyes with her hand, and pretended to look round for the author — though she knew perfectly well where he was seated in the orchestra — and then would inquire if M. Hugo were present. "I am here, Madam," Hugo would reply — and then would ensue a dialogue but slightly varied on each occasion. It is Dumas, who attended many of these rehearsals, that tells the story:

"Do you really like that line?" the actress would say.

"Madam, I so wrote it."

"So you stick to your *lion*?"

"Find me something better, and I will alter it."

"That is not for me to do," retorted the actress. "I am not the author."

"Well, then, Madam, as that is the case, let us leave it as it is."

A little more argument, but next day all had to be gone over again. And when Mdlle. Mars declared that it was a dangerous line, which would certainly be hissed, the author replied that this would only be the case if she did not deliver it with her usual power. At last she ventured to suggest that instead of "*mon lion*" Doña Sol should say "*Monseigneur*," and wondered what objection there could be to the substitution.

"Only," replied Hugo, "that *mon lion* elevates the verse, and *Monseigneur* lowers it,"—adding, "I would rather be hissed for a good verse than applauded for a bad one."

In fact these vexatious interruptions were so irritating to the poet, that towards the close of one of the rehearsals, he asked to speak to Mdlle. Mars, and told her that he wished her to give back the part. The actress turned pale; she was accustomed to be urgently solicited to undertake characters, but never before had she been required to give one up. She apologized, and the little quarrel was in a measure made up; though she preserved a cold, discontented manner which chilled the other actors; happily, however, she did exert all her powers when the hour for their display arrived.

On the first night that "*Hernani*" was performed, a significant incident showed the effect that it produced. The monologue of Charles the Fifth, in the Fourth Act, was received with thunders of applause and while the tumult was unabated, it was intimated to Victor Hugo that he was wanted. It was a little man with eager eyes who wished to speak to him.

"My name is Mame," said the stranger. "I am the partner of M. Baudoin the publisher—but we cannot talk here—can you spare me a minute outside the theatre?"

They passed into the street, when the little man continued:—

"M. Baudoin and I have witnessed the performance—we should like to publish '*Hernani*,' will you sell it?"

"What will you give?" said the author.

"Six thousand francs."

Victor Hugo suggested that he should wait till the performance was over, but M. Mame desired to conclude the business at once, notwithstanding Hugo's generous reminder that the success at the close might be less complete than it appeared at present.

"That is true," said the publisher, "but it may be greater. At the second act I meant to offer you two thousand francs; at the third I advanced to four thousand; and now at the fourth I offer you six. If I wait till the fifth act is over I fear I should offer you ten thousand."

Victor Hugo was so amused that he could not help laughing, and promised that the matter should be arranged the next morning. But this little delay did not suit the impatient publisher who had the money in his pocket, and wished to settle the affair at once. So the pair entered a tobacconist's shop, where stamped paper and pen and ink were procured, and the bargain duly made; one exceedingly acceptable to the poet, who was then very poor, and had but fifty francs in his possession.

In the author's preface to "*Le Roi s'Amuse*" he eloquently defends himself from the charge of having produced an immoral play. Certainly in this work vice is neither really triumphant nor made for one moment attractive, and yet, as the translator forcibly observes, there can be little wonder that after one representation its performance was prohibited.

It was intimated to the Author that "*Le Roi s'Amuse*" was suppressed because it contained a verse that was looked upon as an insult to the Citizen King Louis Philippe. Victor Hugo denied emphatically any such intention, and as for long years afterwards the Orleans family remained on the most familiar and friendly terms with him, it is difficult to suppose that they believed in the accusation. And just as Hugo had refused from Charles the Tenth an addition to his pension in consideration of the suppression of "*Marion de Lorme*"—so now, after the performance of "*Le Roi s'Amuse*" had been prohibited, on being taunted by the

Ministerial journals with receiving his original pension of two thousand francs, he threw it up, declining to take another sou. It is true also that in his preface he speaks contemptuously of the government—but the fact remains—testified anew in the recently published volume, “Choses Vues”—that Hugo continued the intimate associate of the King and the Orleans princes. Few readers will blame the censor for prohibiting the play, though they may differ concerning the verity of his alleged motives—and for pastime may sharpen their wits in seeking to find the clue to the puzzle.

I look upon it as a curious coincidence that the “Lady of Lyons” in London, and “Ruy Blas” in Paris, should have been produced in the same year. Both dramas turn on the incident of a man of humble station loving a woman greatly his superior in social rank, and winning her affections in an assumed character; and quite possibly both plays were suggested by the true story of Angelica Kauffman, who was entrapped into a marriage with a valet, believing him to be a foreign nobleman. But save in the one circumstance no two works can be more dissimilar than these are. The English like plays to end happily, or at any rate, for only the repulsive villains to suffer, and the cleverly constructed yet highly melodramatic “Lady of Lyons” hit the taste of the town exactly. Two great artists, Macready and Helen Faucit, embodied Lord Lytton’s creations in so poetical a manner that they assumed a dignity which inferior actors must fail to give them. The love was pure, and there was repentance with atonement before the happy climax. Besides, the difference between the gardener’s son and the merchant’s daughter was not so outrageously great, as to shut out the hope of its being spanned. The audience was deeply, pathetically touched—the play was effective in the highest degree—and the acting supremely fine—but every one felt that things would come right at last.

Not so with “Ruy Blas.” Near the close of the first act, at scene the third, we know perfectly well that it is a tragedy.

before us. The fatal words of the hero overheard by the remorseless Don Salluste unloose the stream which is to carry him to perdition:—

“Oh! mon âme au demon! Je la vendrais, pour être
Un des jeunes seigneurs que, de cette fenêtre,
Je vois en ce moment.”

“My soul
Is given over, I would sell it might
I thus become like one of those young lords
That from this window I behold.”

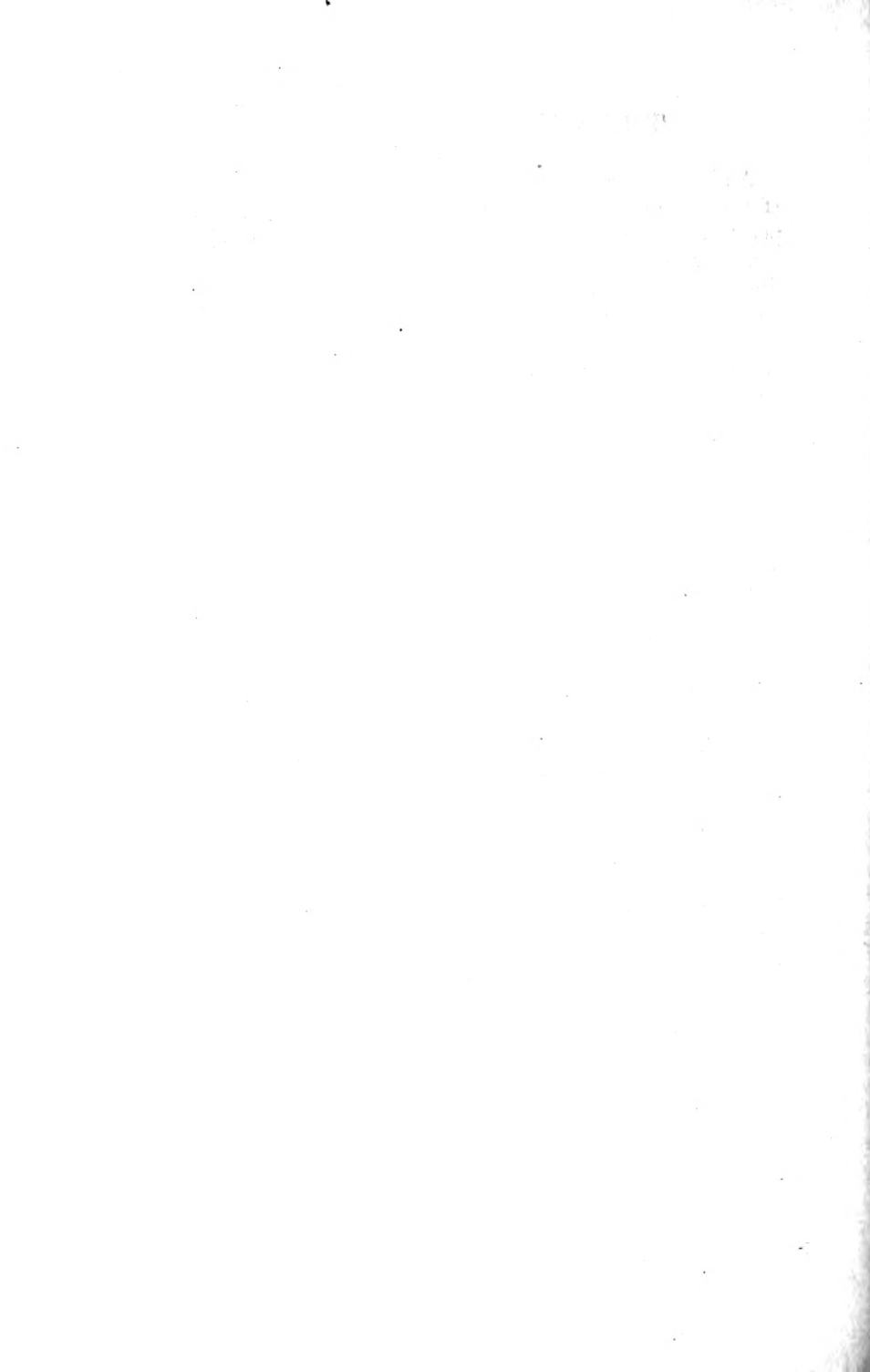
It is a realization of the mediæval legend. He has his wish and his heart's desire, but in consequence wave after wave arises to bear him on to his doom. To those who will read between the lines, Ruy Blas is surely full of the noblest and most Christian teaching. We pity, it is true, the sorely tried and tempted, but we know as a fact in ethics—and therefore a truth to be upheld in Art—that retribution must follow wrong-doing. And as Victor Hugo may be considered the greatest dramatist since Shakespeare, he knew well that his work must be a tragedy. But it is so supreme and perfectly moulded a word of art because he has, in its proper place, brightened the drama with rich comedy. In this he resembles our own great poet. The wonderful manner in which the character of Don Cæsar is sustained and revealed through dialogues flashing with wit, and incidents only to have been conceived by a real humourist—proclaims the master.

Surely there is consummate art in separating the third from the fifth act by a series of scenes, which, though keeping the motive of the play well in view, gives the spectator rest from the culminating excitement of the one, before witnessing the struggle and pathos of the other. Never let the moralist forget that in the end Ruy Blas is the conqueror—conquering even himself, and saving the poor outraged Queen. But the death penalty is inevitable, for Nemesis is never absent from the “personages” of Hugo's dramas.

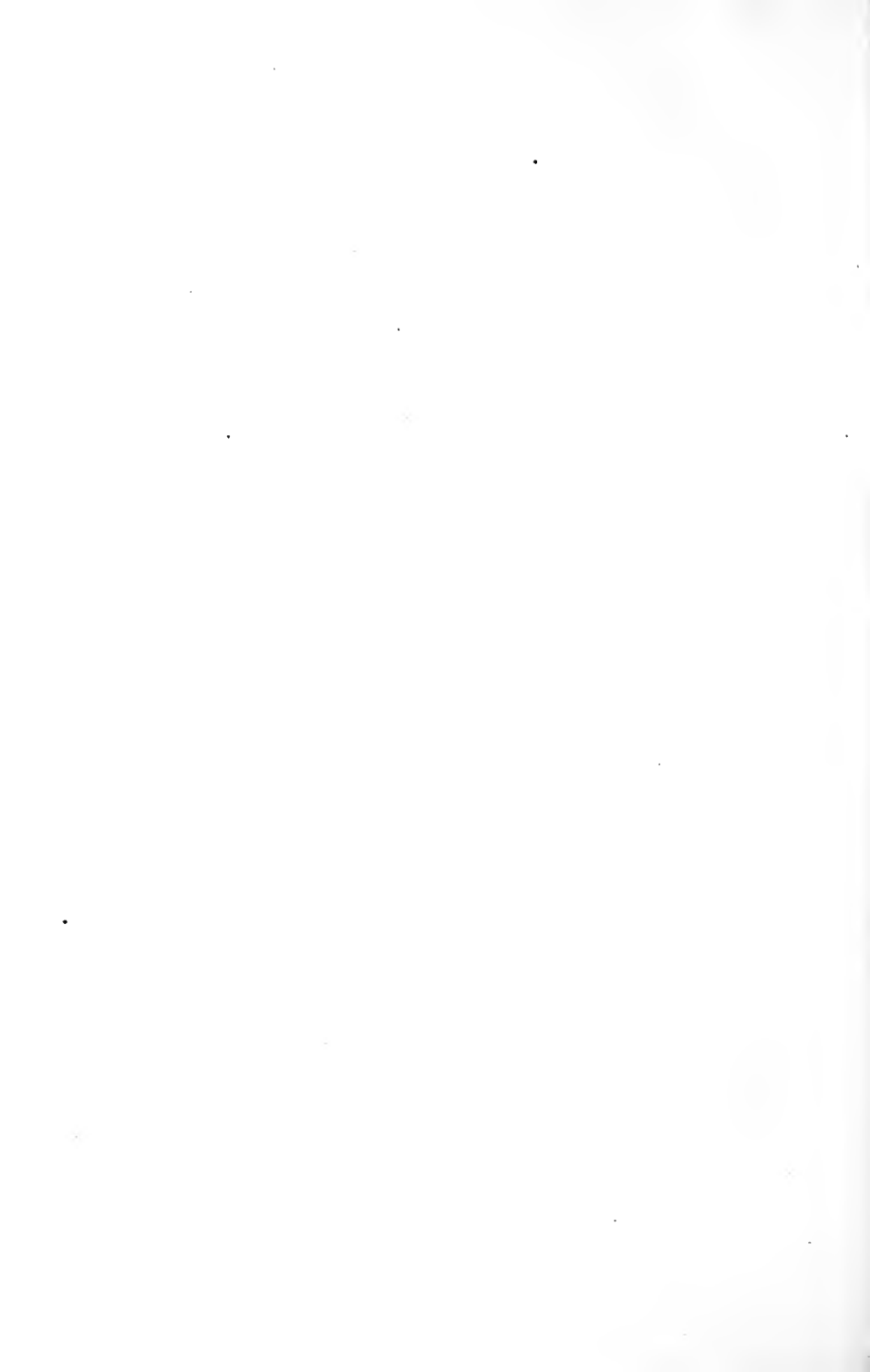
And now I beg leave to say a very few words of myself. If these translations of mine should prove the last work of a pen that for nearly fifty years has been busy in many departments of literature, I hope I shall be justified in the estimation of thoughtful readers. There is such a glow of eternal youth about Hugo's works, that I rather rejoice at finding myself capable of being fascinated by them. The world is always young! Somewhere always noble natures are aspiring, and young hearts beating with their first awakening to a master passion. To faithfully portray the struggles of the heart is one of the poet's missions, and surely in depicting in "Hernani" and "Ruy Blas," love and revenge, ambition and loyalty, remorse and despair, the noblest teaching is embodied — teaching that appeals to many natures more forcibly in the manner in which it is here presented than in a more solemn and didactic form. I do not deny that here and there a daring thought may displease timid readers — but let them rather turn to those eternal truths which are the basis, the life and spirit of all religious creeds, and which shine luminously in the poetry of Victor Hugo. Let us thank him for the jewels he gives us, and not bring a lens through which to search for the flaws!

Ever is Victor Hugo the defender of the weak and oppressed, the scorner of selfishness and vice, the teacher of self-sacrifice in the cause of duty, and the upholder of the dignity of woman. It may be that in these matter-of-fact days we require such teaching quite as much as did mankind in the ages which were called darker, and there is little doubt that the greatest of French poets reaches many hearts that have proved insensible to weaker influences.

CAMILLA CROSLAND.



HERNANI:
A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST
EDITION OF HERNANI, 1830

ONLY a few weeks since, the Author of this drama wrote, concerning a poet who died before maturity, as follows: —

“ . . . At this moment of literary turmoil and contention, whom should we the more pity, those who die, or those who wrestle? Truly it is sad to see a poet of twenty years old pass away, to behold a broken lyre, and a future that vanishes; but, is not repose also some advantage? Are there not those around whom calumnies, injuries, hatreds, jealousies, secret wrongs, base treasons incessantly gather; true men, against whom disloyal war is waged; devoted men, who only seek to bestow on their country one sort of freedom the more, that of art and intelligence; laborious men, who peaceably pursue their conscientious work, a prey on one side to the vile stratagems of official censure, and on the other exposed too often to the ingratitude of even those for whom they toil; may not such be permitted sometimes to turn their eyes with envy towards those who have fallen behind them, and who rest in the tomb? *Invideo*, said Luther, in the cemetery of Worms, *invideo quia quiescunt*.

“What does it signify? Young people, take heart. If the present be made rough for us, the future will be smooth. Romanticism, so often ill-defined, is only — and this is its true definition if we look at it from its combative side — liberalism in literature. This truth is already understood by nearly all the best minds, and the number is great; and soon, for the work is well advanced, liberalism in literature will not be less popular than in politics. Liberty in Art, liberty in

4 AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST

Society, behold the double end towards which consistent and logical minds should tend; behold the double banner that rallies the intelligence — with but few exceptions, which will become more enlightened — of all the young who are now so strong and patient; then, with the young, and at their head the choice spirits of the generation which has preceded us, all those sagacious veterans, who, after the first moment of hesitation and examination, discovered that what their sons are doing to-day is the consequence of what they themselves have achieved, and that liberty in literature is the offspring of political liberty. This principle is that of the age, and will prevail. The *Ultras* of all sorts, classical and monarchical, will in vain help each other to restore the old system, broken to pieces, literary and social; all progress of the country, every intellectual development, every stride of liberty will have caused their scaffolding to give way. And, indeed, their efforts at reaction will have been useful. In revolution every movement is an advance. Truth and liberty have this excellence, that all one does for and against them serves them equally well. Now, after all the great things that our fathers have done, and that we have beheld, now that we have come out of the old social form, why should there not proceed a new out of the old poetic form? For a new people, new art. In admiring the literature of Louis the Fourteenth's age, so well adapted to his monarchy, France will know well how to have its own and national literature of the nineteenth century, to which Mirabeau gave its liberty, and Napoleon its power."—*Letter to the Publishers of the Poems of M. Dovalle.*

Let the author of this drama be pardoned for thus quoting himself. His words have so little the power of impressing, that he often needs to repeat them. Besides, at present it is perhaps not out of place to put before readers the two pages just transcribed. It is not this drama which can in any respect deserve the great name of *new art* or *new poetry*. Far from that; but it is that the principle of freedom in literature has advanced a step; it is that some progress has

been made, not in art, this drama is too small a thing for that, but in the public; it is that in this respect at least one part of the predictions hazarded above has just been realized.

There is, indeed, some danger in making changes thus suddenly, and risking on the stage those tentative efforts hitherto confided to paper, which endures everything; the reading public is very different from the theatrical public, and one might dread seeing the later reject what the former had accepted. This has not been the case. The principle of literary freedom already comprehended by the world of readers and thinkers, has not been less fully accepted by that immense crowd, eager for the pure enjoyment of art, which every night fills the theatres of Paris. This loud and powerful voice of the people, likened to the voice of God, declares that henceforth poetry shall bear the same device as politics: **TOLERATION AND LIBERTY.**

Now let the poet come! He has a public.

And whatever may be this freedom, the public wills that in the State it shall be reconciled with order, and in literature with art. Liberty has a wisdom of its own, without which it is not complete. That the old rules of D'Aubignac should die with the old customs of Cujas is well; that to a literature of the court should succeed a literature of the people is better still; but, above all, it is best that an inner voice should be heard from the depths of all these novelties. Let the principle of liberty work, but let it work well. In letters, as in society, not etiquette, not anarchy, but laws. Neither red heels¹ nor red caps.

This is what the public wants, and it wishes rightly. As for us, in deference to that public which has accepted with so much indulgence an attempt which merits so little, we give this drama now as it has been represented. Perhaps the day will come when the author will publish it as he conceived it,²

¹ Red heels, typical of the aristocracy; red caps, of liberty—or anarchy.—TRANS.

² This day has long since come, and the translation of *Hernani*,

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indicating and discussing the modifications to which he had to submit. These critical details may be neither uninteresting nor unimportant, though they seem trifling at present — freedom in art is admitted, the principal question is settled; why pause to dwell on secondary questions? We shall return to them some day, and also speak of them in detail, demolishing by evidence and reason this system of dramatic censure — which is the only obstacle to the freedom of the theatre now that it no longer exists in the public mind. We shall strive at all risks and perils, and by devotion to art, to expose the thousand abuses of this petty inquisition of the intellect, which has, like the other holy office, its secret judges, its masked executioners, its tortures, its mutilations, and its penalty of death. We will tear away, if we can, those swaddling clothes of the police, in which it is shameful that the theatre should be wrapped up in the nineteenth century.

At present there is only place for gratitude and thanks. To the public it is that the author addresses his own acknowledgments, and he does so from the depths of his heart. This work, not from its talent, but for conscience' and freedom's sake, has been generously protected from enmities by the public, because the public is also itself always conscientious and free. Thanks, then, be rendered to it, as well as to that mighty youthful band which has brought health and favour to the work of a young man as sincere and independent as itself. It was for youth above all that he laboured, because it would be a great and real glory to be applauded by the leading young men, who are intelligent, logical, consistent, truly liberal in literature as well as politics — a noble generation, that opens wide its eyes to look at the truth, and to receive light from all sides.

As for his work, he will not speak of it. He accepts the criticisms which it has drawn forth, the most severe as well as the most kindly, because he may profit by all. He dares not flatter himself that everyone can at once have understood

which is now offered to English readers, is from the un mutilated edition of 1836.— TRANS.

this drama, of which the *Romancero General* is the true key. He would willingly ask persons whom this work has shocked, to read again *Le Cid*, *Don Sanche*, *Nicomède*, or rather all Corneille and all Molière, those great and admirable poets. Such reading, however much it might show the immense inferiority of the author of *Hernani*, would perhaps render them more indulgent to certain things which have offended them in the form, or the motive, of this drama. In fact, the moment is perhaps not yet come to judge it. *Hernani* is but the first stone of an edifice which exists fully constructed in the author's mind, the whole of which can alone give value to this drama. Perhaps one day it will not be thought ill that his fancy, like that of the architect of Bourges, puts a door almost Moorish to his Gothic Cathedral.

Meanwhile, what he has done is but little, and he knows it. May time and power to proceed with his work not fail him! It will but have worth when it is completed. He is not one of those privileged poets who can die or break off before they have finished without peril to their memory; he is not of those who remain great even without having completed their work — happy men, of whom one may say what Virgil said of Carthage traced out: —

Pendent opera interrupta minæque
Murorum ingentes.

March 9th, 1830.

PERSONAGES OF THE DRAMA

HERNANI.

DON CARLOS.

DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA.

DOÑA SOL DE SILVA.

THE KING OF BOHEMIA.

THE DUKE OF BAVARIA.

THE DUKE OF GOTHA.

THE BARON OF HOHENBOURG.

THE DUKE OF LUTZELBOURG.

DON SANCHE.

DON MATIAS.

DON RICARDO.

DON GARCIE SUAREZ.

DON FRANCISCO.

DON JUAN DE HARO.

DON PEDRO GUSMAN DE LARA.

DON GIL TELLEZ GIRON.

DOÑA JOSEFA DUARTE.

JAQUEZ.

A Mountaineer.

A Lady.

First Conspirator.

Second Conspirator.

Third Conspirator.

Conspirators of the Holy League, Germans and Spaniards,
Mountaineers, Nobles, Soldiers, Pages, Attendants, &c.

SPAIN, A. D. 1519.

HERNANI:

ACT FIRST: THE KING

SCENE 1.—SARAGOSSA. *A Chamber. Night: a lamp on the table.*

DOÑA JOSEFA DUARTE, *an old woman dressed in black, with body of her dress worked in jet in the fashion of Isabella the Catholic.* DON CARLOS.

DOÑA JOSEFA, *alone.* *She draws the crimson curtains of the window, and puts some armchairs in order. A knock at a little secret door on the right. She listens. A second knock.*

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Can it be he already? *[Another knock.*

T' is, indeed,

At th' hidden stairway. *[A fourth knock.*

I must open quick.

[She opens the concealed door. DON CARLOS enters, his face muffled in his cloak, and his hat drawn over his brows.

Good evening to you, sir!

[She ushers him in. He drops his cloak and reveals a rich dress of silk and velvet in the Castilian style of 1519. She looks at him closely, and recoils astonished.

What now? — not you,
Signor Hernani! Fire! fire! Help, oh help!

DON CARLOS (*seizing her by the arm*).

But two words more, Duenna, and you die!

[*He looks at her intently. She is frightened into silence.*]

Is this the room of Doña Sol, betrothed

To her old uncle, Duke de Pastrana?

A very worthy lord he is — senile,

White-hair'd and jealous. Tell me, is it true

The beauteous Doña loves a smooth-faced youth,

All whiskerless as yet, and sees him here

Each night, in spite of envious care? Tell me,

Am I informed aright?

[*She is silent. He shakes her by the arm.*]

Will you not speak?

DOÑA JOSEFA.

You did forbid me, sir, to speak two words.

DON CARLOS.

One will suffice. I want a yes, or no.

Say, is thy mistress Doña Sol de Silva?

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Yes, why?

DON CARLOS.

No matter why. Just at this hour

The venerable lover is away?

DOÑA JOSEFA.

He is.

DON CARLOS.

And she expects the young one now?

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Oh, that I could die!

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Say, Duenna,

Is this the place where they will surely meet?

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Yes.

DON CARLOS.

Hide me somewhere here.

DOÑA JOSEFA.

You?

DON CARLOS.

Yes, me.

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Why?

DON CARLOS.

No matter why.

DOÑA JOSEFA.

I hide you here!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, here.

DOÑA JOSEFA.

No, never!

DON CARLOS (*drawing from his girdle a purse and a dagger*).

Madam, condescend to choose
Between a purse and dagger.

DOÑA JOSEFA (*taking the purse*).

Are you then

The devil?

DON CARLOS.

Yes, Duenna.

DoÑA JOSEFA (*opening a narrow cupboard in the wall*),
Go — go in.

DON CARLOS (*examining the cupboard*).
This box!

DOÑA JOSEFA (*shutting up the cupboard*).
If you don't like it, go away.

DON CARLOS (*re-opening cupboard*).
And yet! [*Again examining it.*

Is this the stable where you keep
The broom-stick that you ride on?

He crouches down in the cupboard with difficulty.
Oh! oh! oh!

DOÑA JOSEFA (*joining her hands and looking ashamed*).
A man here!

DON CARLOS (*from the cupboard, still open*).
And was it a woman then
Your mistress here expected?

DOÑA JOSEFA.
Heavens! I hear
The step of Doña Sol! Sir, shut the door!
Quick — quick [*She pushes the cupboard door, which closes.*

DON CARLOS (*from the closed cupboard*).
Remember, if you breathe a word
You die!

DOÑA JOSEFA (*alone*).
Who is this man? If I cry out,
Gracious! there's none to hear. All are asleep
Within the palace walls — Madam and I
Excepted. Pshaw! the other'll come. He wears
A sword; 'tis his affair. And Heav'n keep us
From powers of hell. [*Weighing the purse in her hand.*
At least no thief he is.

Enter DOÑA SOL in white. (DOÑA JOSEFA hides the purse.)

SCENE 2.— DOÑA JOSEFA; DON CARLOS, *hidden*; DOÑA SOL;
afterwards HERNANI.

DOÑA SOL.

Josefa!

DOÑA JOSEFA.

Madam?

DOÑA SOL.

I some mischief dread,
For 'tis full time Hernani should be here.

[*Noise of steps at the secret door.*]

He's coming up; go — quick! at once, undo
Ere he has time to knock.

[JOSEFA *opens the little door. Enter HERNANI in large cloak and large hat; underneath, costume of moun-
taineer of Aragon — grey, with a cuirass of
leather; a sword, a dagger, and a horn at his
girdle.*]

DOÑA SOL (*going to him*).
Hernani! Oh!

HERNANI.

Ah, Doña Sol! it is yourself at last
I see — your voice it is I hear. Oh, why
Does cruel fate keep you so far from me?
I have such need of you to help my heart
Forget all else!

DOÑA SOL (*touching his clothes*).

Oh! Heav'ns! your cloak is drench'd!

The rain must pour!

HERNANI.

I know not.

DOÑA SOL.

And the cold —

You must be cold!

HERNANI.
I feel it not.

DOÑA SOL.

Take off

This cloak then, pray.

HERNANI.
Doña, beloved, tell me,
When night brings happy sleep to you, so pure
And innocent — sleep that half opes your mouth,
Closing your eyes with its light finger-touch —
Does not some angel show how dear you are
To an unhappy man, by all the world
Abandoned and repulsed?

DOÑA SOL.
Sir, you are late;
But tell, me are you cold?

HERNANI.
Not near to you.
Ah! when the raging fire of jealous love
Burns in the veins, and the true heart is riven
By its own tempest, we feel not the clouds
O'erhead, though storm and lightning they fling forth!

DOÑA SOL.
Come, give me now the cloak, and your sword too.

HERNANI (*his hand on his sword*).
No. 'Tis my other love, faithful and pure.
The old Duke, Doña Sol — your promised spouse,
Your uncle — is he absent now?

DOÑA SOL.
Oh, yes;
This hour to us belongs.

HERNANI.
And that is all!

Only this hour! and then comes afterwards! —
What matter! For I must forget or die!
Angel! one hour with thee — with whom I would
Spend life, and afterwards eternity!

DoÑA SOL.

Hernani!

HERNANI.

It is happiness to know
The Duke is absent. I am like a thief
Who forces doors. I enter — see you — rob
An old man of an hour of your sweet voice
And looks. And I am happy, though, no doubt
He would deny me e'en one hour, although
He steals my very life.

DoÑA SOL.

Be calm.

[*Giving the cloak to the Duenna.*
Josefa!

This wet cloak take and dry it. [Exit JOSEFA.

[*She seats herself, and makes a sign for HERNANI to
draw near.*

Now come here.

HERNANI (*without appearing to hear her*).
The Duke, then, is not in the mansion now?

DoÑA SOL.

How grand you look!

HERNANI.

He is away?

DoÑA SOL.

Dear one,

Let us not think about the Duke.

HERNANI.

Madam,

That's dimm'd just now by rusting stain of blood.
Perchance I've rights, though they are shrouded still,
And hid 'neath ebon folds of scaffold cloth,
Yet which, if my attempt one day succeeds,
May, with my sword from out their sheath leap forth.
Meanwhile, from jealous Heaven I've received
But air, and light, and water — gifts bestowed
On all. Now, wish you from the Duke, or me,
To be delivered? You must choose 'twixt us,
Whether you marry him, or follow me.

DoÑA SOL.

You, I will follow !

HERNANI.

'Mong companions rude,
Men all proscribed, of whom the headsman knows
The names already. Men whom neither steel
Nor touch of pity softens; each one urged
By some blood feud that's personal. Wilt thou
Then come? They'd call thee mistress of my band,
For know you not that I a bandit am?
When I was hunted throughout Spain, alone
In thickest forests, and on mountains steep,
'Mong rocks which but the soaring eagle spied,
Old Catalonia like a mother proved.
Among her hills — free, poor, and stern — I grew;
And now, to-morrow if this horn should sound,
Three thousand men would rally at the call.
You shudder, and should pause to ponder well.
Think what 'twill prove to follow me through woods
And over mountain paths, with comrades like
The fiends that come in dreams! To live in fear,
Suspicious of a sound, of voices, eyes:
To sleep upon the earth, drink at the stream,
And hear at night, while nourishing perchance
Some wakeful babe, the whistling musket balls.
To be a wanderer with me proscribed,

And when my father I shall follow — then,
E'en to the scaffold, you to follow me!

DoÑA SOL.

I'll follow you.

HERNANI.

The Duke is wealthy, great
And prosperous, without a stain upon
His ancient name. He offers you his hand,
And can give all things — treasures, dignities,
And pleasure ——

DoÑA SOL.

We'll set out to-morrow. Oh!

Hernani, censure not th' audacity
Of this decision. Are you angel mine
Or demon? Only one thing do I know,
That I'm your slave. Now, listen: wheresoe'er
You go, I go — pause you or move I'm yours.
Why act I thus? Ah! that I cannot tell;
Only I want to see you evermore.
When sound of your receding footstep dies
I feel my heart stops beating; without you
Myself seems absent, but when I detect
Again the step I love, my soul comes back,
I breathe — I live once more.

HERNANI (*embracing her*).

Oh! angel mine!

DoÑA SOL.

At midnight, then, to-morrow, clap your hands
Three times beneath my window, bringing there
Your escort. Go! I shall be strong and brave.

HERNANI.

Now know you who I am?

DoÑA SOL.

Only my lord.

Enough — what matters else? — I follow you.

HERNANI.

Not so. Since you, a woman weak, decide
To come with me, 'tis right that you should know
What name, what rank, what soul, perchance what fate
There hides beneath the low Hernani here.
Yes, you have willed to link yourself for aye
With brigand — would you still with outlaw mate?

DON CARLOS (*opening the cupboard*).

When will you finish all this history?
Think you 'tis pleasant in this cupboard hole?

[HERNANI recoils, astonished. DOÑA SOL screams and
takes refuge in HERNANI's arms, looking at DON
CARLOS with frightened gaze.]

HERNANI (*his hand on the hilt of his sword*).

Who is this man?

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, heavens, help!

HERNANI.

Be still,

My Doña Sol! you'll wake up dangerous eyes.
Never — whatever be — while I am near,
Seek other help than mine.

(to DON CARLOS.) What do you here?

DON CARLOS.

I? — Well, I am not riding through the wood,
That you should ask.

HERNANI.

He who affronts, then jeers,
May cause his heir to laugh.

DON CARLOS.

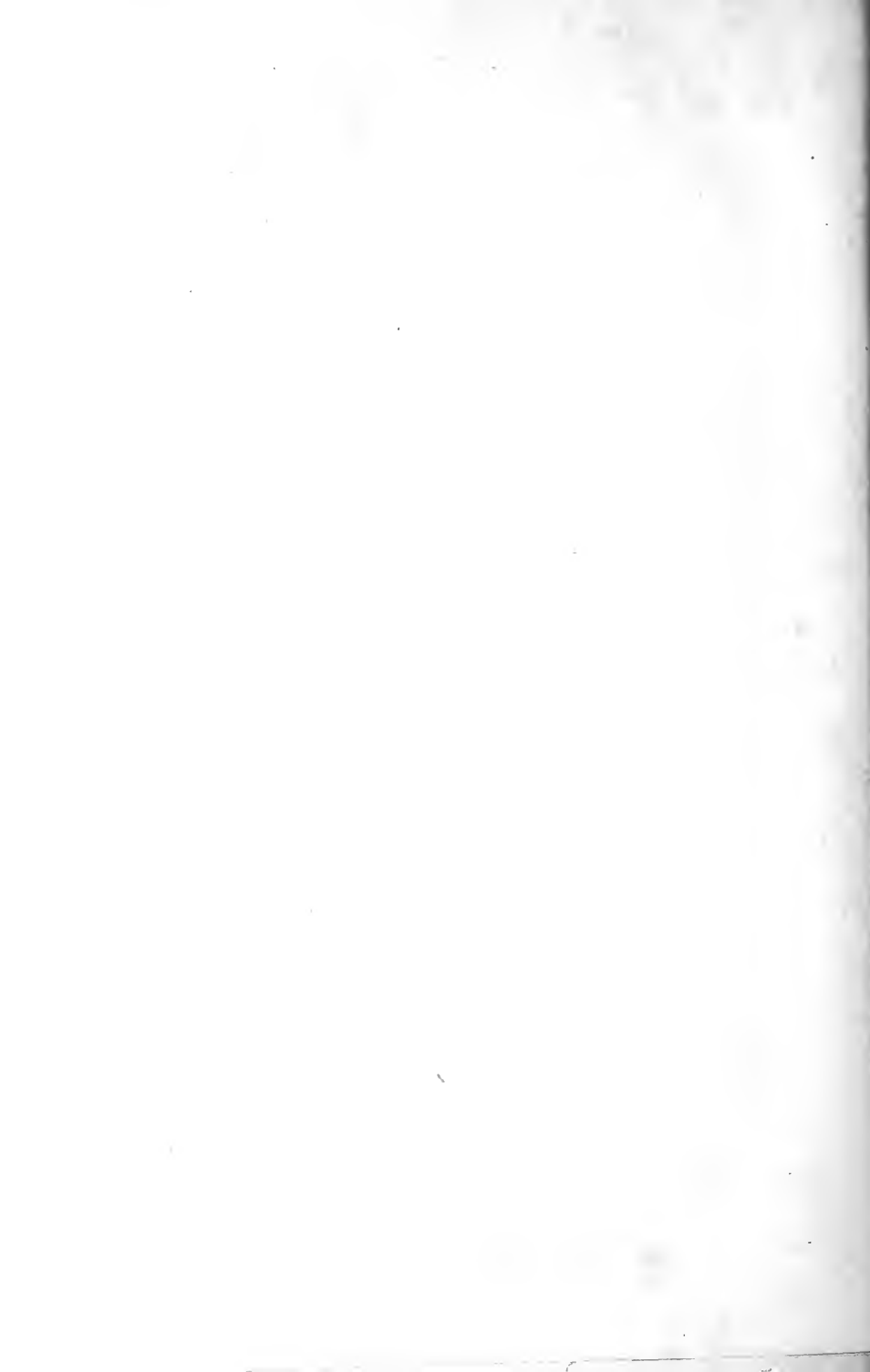
Each, Sir, in turn.

Let us speak frankly. You the lady love,
And come each night to mirror in her eyes



Don Carlos, "When will you finish all this history?
'Think you 'tis pleasant in this cupboard hole?"

Dramas. Hernani: Act I, Page 20.



Your own. I love her too, and want to know
Who 'tis I have so often seen come in
The window way, while I stand at the door.

HERNANI.

Upon my word, I'll send you out the way
I enter.

DON CARLOS.

As to that we'll see. My love
I offer unto Madam. Shall we then
Agree to share it? In her beauteous soul
I've seen so much of tenderness, and love,
And sentiment, that she, I'm very sure,
Has quite enough for ardent lovers twain.
Therefore to-night, wishing to end suspense
On your account, I forced an entrance, hid,
And — to confess it all — I listened too.
But I heard badly, and was nearly choked;
And then I crumpled my French vest — and so,
By Jove! come out I must!

HERNANI.

Likewise my blade
Is not at ease, and hurries to leap out.

DON CARLOS (*bowing*).

Sir, as you please.

HERNANI (*drawing his sword*).

Defend yourself!

[DON CARLOS *draws his sword*.

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, Heaven!

DON CARLOS.

Be calm, Señora.

HERNANI (*to DON CARLOS*).

Tell me, Sir, your name.

DON CARLOS.

Tell me yours!

HERNANI.

It is a fatal secret,
Kept for my breathing in another's ear,
Some day when I am conqueror, with my knee
Upon his breast, and dagger in his heart.

DON CARLOS.

Then tell to me this other's name.

HERNANI.

To thee
What matters it? On guard! Defend thyself!
[*They cross swords. Doña SOL falls trembling into a chair. They hear knocks at the door.*]

Doña SOL (*rising in alarm*).
Oh Heavens! there's some one knocking at the door!
[*The champions pause. Enter JOSEFA, at the little door, in a frightened state.*]

HERNANI (*to JOSEFA*).
Who knocks in this way?

Doña JOSEFA (*to Doña SOL*).
Madam, a surprise!
An unexpected blow. It is the Duke
Come home.

Doña SOL (*clasping her hands*).
The Duke! Then every hope is lost!

Doña JOSEFA (*looking round*).
Gracious! the stranger out! and swords, and fighting!
Here's a fine business!
[*The two combatants sheathe their swords. DON CARLOS draws his cloak round him, and pulls his hat down on his forehead. More knocking.*]

HERNANI.

What is to be done?

[*More knocking.*]

A VOICE (*without*).

Doña Sol, open to me.

[*Doña JOSEFA is going to the door, when HERNANI stops her.*]

HERNANI.

Do not open.

Doña JOSEFA (*pulling out her rosary*).

Holy St. James! now draw us through this broil!

[*More knocking.*]

HERNANI (*pointing to the cupboard*).

Let's hide!

DON CARLOS.

What! in the cupboard?

HERNANI.

Yes, go in;

I will take care that it shall hold us both.

DON CARLOS.

Thanks. No; it is too good a joke.

HERNANI (*pointing to secret door*).

Let's fly

That way.

DON CARLOS.

Good night! But as for me I stay

Here.

HERNANI.

Fire and fury, Sir, we will be quits

For this. (*To Doña SOL.*) What if I firmly barr'd the door?

DON CARLOS (*to JOSEFA*).

Open the door.

HERNANI.

What is it that he says?

DON CARLOS (*to JOSEFA, who hesitates bewildered*).
Open the door, I say.

[*More knocking. JOSEFA opens the door, trembling.*]

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, I shall die!

SCENE 3.—*The same, with DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA, in black; white hair and beard. Servants with lights.*

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My niece with two men at this hour of night!
Come all! The thing is worth exposing here.
(*To DOÑA SOL.*) Now by St. John of Avila, I vow
That we three with you, madam, are by two
Too many. (*To the two young men.*) My young Sirs,
what do you here?

When we'd the Cid and Bernard — giants both
Of Spain and of the world — they travelled through
Castile protecting women, honouring
Old men. For them steel armour had less weight
Than your fine velvets have for you. These men
Respected whitened beards, and when they loved,
Their love was consecrated by the Church.

Never did such men cozen or betray,
For reason that they had to keep unflawed
The honour of their house. Wished they to wed,
They took a stainless wife in open day,
Before the world, with sword, or axe, or lance
In hand. But as for villains such as you,
Who come at eve, peeping behind them oft,
To steal away the honour of men's wives
In absence of their husbands, I declare,
The Cid, our ancestor, had he but known
Such men, he would have plucked away from them
Nobility usurped, have made them kneel,

While he with flat of sword their blazon dashed.
Behold what were the men of former times
Whom I, with anguish, now compare with these
I see to-day! What do you here? Is it
To say, a white-haired man's but fit for youth
To point at when he passes in the street,
And jeer at there? Shall they so laugh at me,
Tried soldier of Zamora? At the least
Not yours will be that laugh.

HERNANI.

But Duke —

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Be still!

What! You have sword and lance, falcons, the chase,
And songs to sing 'neath balconies at night,
Festivals, pleasures, feathers in your hats,
Raiment of silk — balls, youth, and joy of life;
But wearied of them all, at any price
You want a toy, and take an old man for it.
Ah, though you've broke the toy, God wills that it
In bursting should be flung back in your face!
Now follow me!

HERNANI.

Most noble Duke —

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Follow —

Follow me, sirs. Is this alone a jest?
What! I've a treasure, mine to guard with care,
A young girl's character, a family's fame.
This girl I love — by kinship to me bound,
Pledged soon to change her ring for one from me.
I know her spotless, chaste, and pure. Yet when
I leave my home one hour, I — Ruy Gomez
De Silva — find a thief who steals from me
My honour, glides unto my house. Back, back,
Make clean your hands, oh base and soulless men,

Whose presence, brushing by, must serve to taint
 Our women's fame! But no, 'tis well. Proceed.
 Have I not something more? [*Snatches off his collar.*]

Take, tread it now

Beneath your feet. Degrade my Golden Fleece.

[*Throws off his hat.*]

Pluck at my hair, insult me every way,
 And then, to-morrow through the town make boast
 That lowest scoundrels in their vilest sport
 Have never shamed a nobler brow, nor soiled
 More whitened hair.

DoÑA SOL.

My lord —

DON RUY GOMEZ (*to his servants*).

A rescue! grooms!

Bring me my dagger of Toledo, axe,

And dirk.

[*To the young men.*]

Now follow — follow me — ye two.

DON CARLOS (*stepping forward a little*).

Duke, this is not the pressing thing just now;

First we've to think of Maximilian dead,

The Emperor of Germany.

[*Opens his cloak and shows his face, previously hidden
 by his hat.*]

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Jest you!

Heavens, the King!

DoÑA SOL.

The King!

HERNANI.

The King of Spain!

DON CARLOS (*gravely*).

Yes, Charles, my noble Duke, are thy wits gone?

The Emperor, my grandsire, is no more.

I knew it not until this eve, and came

At once to tell it you and counsel ask,
Incognito, at night, knowing you well
A loyal subject that I much regard.
The thing is very simple that has caused
This hubbub.

[DON RUY GOMEZ *sends away servants by a sign, and approaches DON CARLOS. DOÑA SOL looks at THE KING with fear and surprise. HERNANI from a corner regards him with flashing eyes.*

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But oh, why was it the door
Was not more quickly opened?

DON CARLOS.

Reason good.

Remember all your escort. When it is
A weighty secret of the state I bear
That brings me to your palace, it is not
To tell it to thy servants.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Highness, oh!

Forgive me, some appearances —

DON CARLOS.

Good father,

Thee Governor of the Castle of Figuière
I've made. But whom thy governor shall I make?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Oh, pardon —

DON CARLOS.

'Tis enough. We'll say no more
Of this. The Emperor is dead.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your Highness's

Grandfather dead!

DON CARLOS.

Ay! Duke, you see me here

In deep affliction.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Who'll succeed him?

DON CARLOS.

A Duke of Saxony is named. The throne
Francis the First of France aspires to mount.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Where do the Electors of the Empire meet?

DON CARLOS.

They say at Aix-la-Chapelle, or at Spire,
Or Frankfort.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But our King, whom God preserve!

Has he not thought of Empire?

DON CARLOS.

Constantly.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

To you it should revert.

DON CARLOS.

I know it, Duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Your father was Archduke of Austria.
I hope 'twill be remembered that you are
Grandson to him, who but just now has changed
Th' imperial purple for a winding-sheet.

DON CARLOS.

I am, besides, a citizen of Ghent.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

In my own youth your grandfather I saw.
Alas! I am the sole survivor now

Of all that generation past. All dead!
He was an Emperor magnificent
And mighty.

DON CARLOS.
Rome is for me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Valiant, firm,
And not tyrannical, this head might well
Become th' old German body.
[*He bends over THE KING's hands and kisses them.*

Yet so young.
I pity you indeed, thus plunged in such
A sorrow.

DON CARLOS.
Ah! the Pope is anxious now
To get back Sicily — the isle that's mine;
'Tis ruled that Sicily cannot belong
Unto an Emperor; therefore it is
That he desires me Emperor to be made;
And then, to follow that, as docile son
I give up Naples too. Let us but have
The Eagle, and we'll see if I allow
Its wings to be thus clipp'd!

DON RUY GOMEZ.
What joy 'twould be
For this great veteran of the throne to see
Your brow, so fit, encircled by his crown!
Ah, Highness, we together weep for him,
The Christian Emperor, so good, so great!

DON CARLOS.
The Holy Father's clever. He will say —
This isle unto my States should come; 'tis but
A tatter'd rag that scarce belongs to Spain.
What will you do with this ill-shapen isle
That's sewn upon the Empire by a thread?

Your Empire is ill-made; but quick, come here,
The scissors bring, and let us cut away! —
Thanks, Holy Father, but if I have luck
I think that many pieces such as this
Upon the Holy Empire will be sewn!
And if some rags from me are ta'en, I mean
With isles and duchies to replace them all.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Console yourself, for we shall see again
The dead more holy and more great. There is
An Empire of the Just.

DON CARLOS.

Francis the First

Is all ambition. The old Emperor dead,
Quick he'll turn wooing. Has he not fair France
Most Christian? 'Tis a place worth holding fast.
Once to King Louis did my grandsire say —
If I were God, and had two sons, I'd make
The elder God, the second, King of France.

[to DON RUY GOMEZ.]

Think you that Francis has a chance to win?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

He is a victor.

DON CARLOS.

There'd be all to change —
The golden bull doth foreigners exclude.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

In a like manner, Highness, you would be
Accounted King of Spain.

DON CARLOS.

But I was born

A citizen of Ghent.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

His last campaign
Exalted Francis mightily.

DON CARLOS.

The Eagle

That soon perchance upon my helm will gleam
Knows also how to open out its wings.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And knows your Highness Latin?

DON CARLOS.

Ah, not much.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A pity that. The German nobles like
The best those who in Latin speak to them.

DON CARLOS.

With haughty Spanish they will be content,
For trust King Charles, 'twill be of small account,
When masterful the voice, what tongue it speaks.
To Flanders I must go. Your King, dear Duke,
Must Emperor return. The King of France
Will stir all means. I must be quick to win.
I shall set out at once.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Do you then go,

Oh Highness, without clearing Aragon
Of those fresh bandits who, among the hills,
Their daring insolence show everywhere?

DON CARLOS.

To the Duke d'Arcos I have orders given
That he should quite exterminate the band.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But is the order given to its Chief
To let the thing be done?

DON CARLOS.

Who is this Chief —

His name?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I know not. But the people say
That he's an awkward customer.

DON CARLOS.

Pshaw! I know
That now he somewhere in Galicia hides;
With a few soldiers, soon we'll capture him.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Then it was false, the rumour which declared
That he was hereabouts?

DON CARLOS.

Quite false. Thou canst
Accommodate me here to-night.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*bowing to the ground*).

Thanks! Thanks!

Highness! (*He calls his servants.*)

You'll do all honour to the King,

My guest.

[*The servants re-enter with lights. The DUKE arranges them in two rows to the door at the back. Meanwhile DOÑA SOL approaches HERNANI softly. THE KING observes them.*]

DOÑA SOL (*to HERNANI*).

To-morrow, midnight, without fail
Beneath my window clap your hands three times.

HERNANI (*softly*).

To-morrow night.

DON CARLOS (*aside*).

To-morrow!

[*Aloud to DOÑA SOL, whom he approaches with politeness.*]

Let me now

Escort you hence, I pray.

[*He leads her to the door. She goes out.*]

HERNANI (*his hand in his breast on dagger hilt*).
My dagger true!

DON CARLOS (*coming back, aside*).
Our man here has the look of being trapp'd.
[*He takes HERNANI aside.*

I've crossed my sword with yours; that honour, sir,
I've granted you. For many reasons I
Suspect you much, but to betray you now
Would shame the King; go therefore freely. E'en
I deign to aid your flight.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*coming back, and pointing to HERNANI*).
This lord — who's he?

DON CARLOS.
One of my followers, who'll soon depart.
[*They go out with servants and lights, the DUKE preceding with waxlight in his hand.*

SCENE 4.— HERNANI *alone*.

HERNANI.

One of thy followers! I am, oh King!
Well said. For night and day and step by step
I follow thee, with eye upon thy path
And dagger in my hand. My race in me
Pursues thy race in thee. And now behold
Thou art my rival! For an instant I
'Twixt love and hate was balanced in the scale.
Not large enough my heart for her and thee;
In loving her oblivious I became
Of all my hate of thee. But since 'tis thou
That comes to will I should remember it,
I recollect. My love it is that tilts
Th' uncertain balance, while it falls entire
Upon the side of hate. Thy follower!

'Tis thou hast said it. Never courtier yet
Of thy accursed court, or noble, fain
To kiss thy shadow — not a seneschal
With human heart abjured in serving thee;
No dog within the palace, trained the King
To follow, will thy steps more closely haunt
And certainly than I. What they would have,
These famed grandees, is hollow title, or
Some toy that shines — some golden sheep to hang
About the neck. Not such a fool am I.
What I would have is not some favour vain,
But 'tis thy blood, won by my conquering steel —
Thy soul from out thy body forced — with all
That at the bottom of thy heart was reached
After deep delving. Go — you are in front —
I follow thee. My watchful vengeance walks
With me, and whispers in mine ear. Go where
Thou wilt I'm there to listen and to spy,
And noiselessly my step will press on thine.
No day, shouldst thou but turn thy head, oh King,
But thou wilt find me, motionless and grave,
At festivals; at night, should'st thou look back,
Still wilt thou see my flaming eyes behind.

[Exit by the little door.]

SECOND ACT: THE BANDIT

SARAGOSSA.

SCENE 1.— *A square before the Palace of SILVA. On the left the high walls of the Palace, with a window and a balcony. Below the window a little door. To the right, at the back, houses of the street. Night. Here and there are a few windows still lit up, shining in the front of the houses.*

DON CARLOS, DON SANCHEZ DE ZUNIGA COMTE DE MONTEREY, DON MATIAS CENTURION MARQUIS D'ALMUNAN, DON RICARDO DE ROXAS LORD OF CASAPALMA.

All four arrive, DON CARLOS at the head, hats pulled down, and wrapped in long cloaks, which their swords inside raise up.

DON CARLOS (*looking up at the balcony*).

Behold! We're at the balcony — the door.

My heart is bounding.

[*Pointing to the window, which is dark.*

Ah, no light as yet.

[*He looks at the windows where light shines.*

Although it shines just where I'd have it not,

While where I wish for light is dark.

DON SANCHEZ.

Your Highness,

Now let us of this traitor speak again.

And you permitted him to go!

DON CARLOS.

'Tis true.

DON MATIAS.

And he, perchance, was Major of the band.

DON CARLOS.

Were he the Major or the Captain e'en,
No crown'd king ever had a haughtier air.

DON SANCHO.

Highness, his name?

DON CARLOS (*his eyes fixed on the window*).

Muñoz ——— Fernan ———

(*With gesture of a man suddenly recollecting*).

A name

In i.

DON SANCHO.

Perchance Hernani?

DON CARLOS.

Yes.

DON SANCHO.

'Twas he.

DON MATIAS.

The chief, Hernani!

DON SANCHO.

Cannot you recall

His speech?

DON CARLOS.

Oh, I heard nothing in the vile

And wretched cupboard.

DON SANCHO.

Wherefore let him slip

When there you had him?

DON CARLOS (*turning round gravely and looking him in the face*).

Count de Monterey,

You question me!

[*The two nobles step back, and are silent.*

Besides, it was not he
Was in my mind. It was his mistress, not
His head, I wanted. Madly I'm in love
With two dark eyes, the loveliest in the world,
My friends! Two mirrors, and two rays! two flames!
I heard but of their history these words:
"To-morrow come at midnight." 'Twas enough.
The joke is excellent! For while that he,
The bandit lover, by some murd'rous deed
Some grave to dig, is hindered and delayed,
I softly take his dove from out its nest.

DON RICARDO.

Highness, 'twould make the thing far more complete
If we, the dove in gaining, killed the kite.

DON CARLOS.

Count, 'tis most capital advice. Your hand
Is prompt.

DON RICARDO (*bowing low*).

And by what title will it please
The King that I be Count?

DON SANCHO.

'Twas a mistake.

DON RICARDO (*to DON SANCHO*).

The King has called me Count.

DON CARLOS.

Enough — enough!

(*to DON RICARDO.*)

I let the title fall; but pick it up.

DON RICARDO (*bowing again*).
Thanks, Highness.

DON SANCHO.
A fine Count — Count by mistake!
[THE KING walks to the back of the stage, watching eagerly the lighted windows. The two lords talk together at the front.]

DON MATIAS (*to DON SANCHO*).
What think you that the King will do, when once
The beauty's taken?

DON SANCHO (*looking sideways at DON RICARDO*).
Countess she'll be made;
Lady of honour afterwards, and then,
If there's a son, he will be King.

DON MATIAS.
How so? —
My Lord! a bastard! Let him be a Count.
Were one His Highness, would one choose as king
A Countess' son?

DON SANCHO.
He'd make her Marchioness
Ere then, dear Marquis.

DON MATIAS.
Bastards — they are kept
For conquer'd countries. They for viceroys serve.
[DON CARLOS comes forward.]

DON CARLOS (*looking with vexation at the lighted windows*).
Might one not say they're jealous eyes that watch?
Ah! there are two which darken; we shall do.
Weary the time of expectation seems —
Sirs, who can make it go more quickly?

DON SANCHO.

That

Is what we often ask ourselves within
The palace.

DON CARLOS.

'Tis the thing my people say
Again with you. [*The last window light is extinguished.*
The last light now is gone.

(*Turning towards the balcony of Doña Sol, still dark.*)
Oh, hateful window! When wilt thou light up?
The night is dark; come, Doña Sol, and shine
Like to a star! (To DON RICARDO.)

Is 't midnight yet?

DON RICARDO.

Almost.

DON CARLOS.

Ah! we must finish, for the other one
At any moment may appear.

[*A light appears in Doña Sol's chamber. Her shadow
is seen through the glass.*

My friends!

A lamp! and she herself seen through the pane!
Never did daybreak charm me as this sight.
Let's hasten with the signal she expects.
We must clap hands three times. An instant more
And you will see her. But our number, perhaps,
Will frighten her. Go, all three out of sight
Beyond there, watching for the man we want.
'Twixt us, my friends, we'll share the loving pair,
For me the girl—the brigand is for you.

DON RICARDO.

Best thanks.

DON CARLOS.

If he appear from ambuscade,
Rush quickly, knock him down, and, while the dupe

Recovers from the blow, it is for me
To carry safely off the darling prize.
We'll laugh anon. But kill him not outright,
He's brave, I own;—killing 's a grave affair.

[*The lords bow and go. DON CARLOS waits till they are quite gone, then claps his hands twice. At the second time the window opens, and DOÑA SOL appears on the balcony.*]

SCENE 2.—DON CARLOS. DOÑA SOL.

DOÑA SOL (*from the balcony*).
Hernani, is that you?

DON CARLOS (*aside*).
The devil! We must
Not parley! [*He claps his hands again.*]

DOÑA SOL.
I am coming down.
[*She closes the window and the light disappears. The next minute the little door opens, and she comes out, the lamp in her hand, and a mantle over her shoulders.*]

DOÑA SOL.
Hernani!
[DON CARLOS *pulls his hat down on his face, and hurries towards her.*]

DOÑA SOL (*letting her lamp fall*).
Heavens! 'Tis not his footstep!
She attempts to go back, but DON CARLOS runs to her and seizes her by the arm.

DON CARLOS.

Doña Sol!

DOÑA SOL.
'Tis not his voice! Oh, misery!

DON CARLOS.

What voice

Is there that thou could'st hear that would be more
A lover's? It is still a lover here,
And King for one.

DOÑA SOL.
The King!

DON CARLOS.

Ah! wish, command,

A kingdom waits thy will; for he whom thou
Hast vanquish'd is the King, thy lord—'tis Charles,
Thy slave!

DOÑA SOL (*trying to escape from him*).

To the rescue! Help, Hernani! Help!

DON CARLOS.

Thy fear is maidenly, and worthy thee.
'Tis not thy bandit—'tis thy King that holds
Thee now!

DOÑA SOL.

Ah, no. The bandit's you. Are you
Not 'shamed? The blush unto my own cheek mounts
For you. Are these the exploits to be noised
Abroad? A woman thus at night to seize!
My bandit's worth a hundred of such kings!
I do declare, if man were born at level
Of his soul, and God made rank proportional
To his heart, he would be king and prince, and you
The robber be!

DON CARLOS (*trying to entice her*).

Madam!—

DOÑA SOL.

Do you forget

My father was a Count?

DON CARLOS.

And you I'll make

A Duchess.

DOÑA SOL (*repulsing him*).

Cease! All this is shameful; — go!

[*She retreats a few steps.*]

Nothing, Don Carlos, can there 'twixt us be.

My father for you freely shed his blood.

I am of noble birth, and heedful ever

Of my name's purity. I am too high

To be your concubine — too low to be

Your wife.

DON CARLOS.

Princess!

DOÑA SOL.

Carry to worthless girls,

King Charles, your vile addresses. Or, if me

You treat insultingly, I'll show you well

That I'm a woman, and a noble dame.

DON CARLOS.

Well, then but come, and you shall share my throne,

My name — you shall be Queen and Empress —

DOÑA SOL.

No.

It is a snare. Besides, I frankly speak,

Since, Highness, it concerns you. I avow

I'd rather with my king, Hernani, roam,

An outcast from the world and from the law —

Know thirst and hunger, wandering all the year,

Sharing the hardships of his destiny —

Exile and warfare, mourning hours of terror,

Than be an Empress with an Emperor!

DON CARLOS.

Oh, happy man is he!

DoÑA SOL.

What! poor, proscribed!

DON CARLOS.

'Tis well with him, though poor, proscribed he be,
For he's beloved! — an angel watches him!
I'm desolate. You hate me, then?

DoÑA SOL.

I love

You not.

DON CARLOS (*seizing her violently*).

Well, then, it matters not to me

Whether you love me, or you love me not!
You shall come with me — yes, for that my hand's
The stronger, and I will it! And we'll see
If I for nothing am the King of Spain
And of the Indies!

DoÑA SOL (*struggling*).

Highness! Pity me!

You're King, you only have to choose among
The Countesses, the Duchesses, the great
Court ladies, all have love prepared to meet
And answer yours; but what has my proscribed
Received from niggard fortune? You possess
Castile and Aragon — Murcia and Léon,
Navarre, and still ten kingdoms more. Flanders,
And India with the mines of gold you own,
An empire without peer, and all so vast
That ne'er the sun sets on it. And when you,
The King, have all, would you take me, poor girl,
From him who has but me alone.

[*She throws herself on her knees. He tries to draw her up.*

DON CARLOS.

Come — come!

I cannot listen. Come with me. I'll give

Of Spain a fourth part unto thee. Say, now.
What wilt thou? Choose.

DOÑA SOL (*struggling in his arms*).

For mine own honour's sake
I'll only from your Highness take this dirk.
[*She snatches the poignard from his girdle.*
Approach me now but by a step!

DON CARLOS.

The beauty!

I wonder not she loves a rebel now.

[*He makes a step towards her. She raises the dirk.*

DOÑA SOL.

Another step, I kill you — and myself.

[*He retreats again. She turns and cries loudly.*
Hernani! Oh, Hernani!

DON CARLOS.

Peace!

DOÑA SOL.

One step,

'And all is finished.

DON CARLOS.

Madam, to extremes

I'm driven. Yonder there I have three men
To force you — followers of mine.

HERNANI (*coming suddenly behind him*).

But one

You have forgotten.

[*THE KING turns, and sees HERNANI motionless behind him in the shade, his arms crossed under the long cloak which is wrapped round him, and the brim of his hat raised up. DOÑA SOL makes an exclamation and runs to him.*

SCENE 3.—DON CARLOS, DOÑA SOL, HERNANI.

HERNANI (*motionless, his arms still crossed, and his fiery eyes fixed on the KING*).

Heaven my witness is,
That far from here it was I wished to seek him.

DOÑA SOL.
Hernani! save me from him.

HERNANI.
My dear love,
Fear not.

DON CARLOS.
Now what could all my friends in town
Be doing, thus to let pass by the chief
Of the Bohemians? Ho! Monterey!

HERNANI.
Your friends are in the hands of mine just now,
So call not on their powerless swords; for three
That you might claim, sixty to me would come
Each one worth four of yours. So let us now
Our quarrel terminate. What! you have dared
To lay a hand upon this girl! It was
An act of folly, great Castilian King,
And one of cowardice!

DON CARLOS.
Sir Bandit, hold!
There must be no reproach from you to me!

HERNANI.
He jeers! Oh, I am not a king; but when
A king insults me, and above all jeers,
My anger swells and surges up, and lifts

Me to his height. Take care! When I'm offended,
 Men fear far more the reddening of my brow
 Than helm of king. Foolhardy, therefore, you
 If still you're lured by hope. *[Seizes his arm.]*

Know you what hand
 Now grasps you? Listen. 'Twas your father who
 Was death of mine. I hate you for it. You
 My title and my wealth have taken. You
 I hate. And the same woman now we love.
 I hate — hate — from my soul's depths you I hate.

DON CARLOS.

That's well.

HERNANI.

And yet this night my hate was lull'd.
 Only one thought, one wish, one want I had —
 'Twas Doña Sol! And I, absorbed in love,
 Came here to find you daring against her
 To strive, with infamous design! You — you,
 The man forgot — thus in my pathway placed!
 I tell you, King, you are demented! Ah!
 King Charles, now see you're taken in the snare
 Laid by yourself: and neither flight nor help
 For thee is possible. I hold thee fast,
 Besieged, alone, surrounded by thy foes,
 Bloodthirsty ones, what wilt thou do?

DON CARLOS (*proudly.*)

Dare you

To question me!

HERNANI.

Pish! pish! I would not wish
 An arm obscure should strike thee. 'Tis not so
 My vengeance should have play. 'Tis I alone
 Must deal with thee. Therefore defend thyself.
[He draws his sword.]

DON CARLOS.

I am your lord, the King. Strike! but no duel,

HERNANI.

Higness, thou may'st remember yesterday
Thy sword encountered mine.

DON CARLOS.

I yesterday
Could do it. I your name knew not, and you
Were ignorant of my rank. Not so to-day.
You know who I am, I who you are now.

HERNANI.

Perchance.

DON CARLOS.

No duel. You can murder. Do.

HERNANI.

Think you that kings to me are sacred? Come,
Defend thyself.

DON CARLOS.

You will assassinate

Me then?

[HERNANI falls back. The KING looks at him with
eagle eyes.]

Ah! bandits, so you dare to think
That your most vile brigades may safely spread
Through towns — ye blood-stained, murderous, miscreant
crew —

But that you'll play at magnanimity!
As if we'd deign th' ennobling of your dirks
By touch of our own swords — we victims duped.
No, crime enthralls you — after you it trails.
Duels with you! Away! and murder me.

[HERNANI, morose and thoughtful, plays for some in-
stants with the hilt of his sword, then turns sharply
towards the KING and snaps the blade on the pave-
ment.]

HERNANI.

Go, then.

[The KING half turns towards him and looks at him haughtily.]

We shall have fitter meetings. Go.

Get thee away.

DON CARLOS.

'Tis well. I go, Sir, soon
Unto the Ducal Palace. I, your King,
Will then employ the magistrate. Is there
Yet put a price upon your head?

HERNANI.

Oh, yes.

DON CARLOS.

My master, from this day I reckon you
A rebel, trait'rous subject; you I warn.
I will pursue you everywhere, and make
You outlaw from my kingdom.

HERNANI.

That I am

Already.

DON CARLOS.

That is well.

HERNANI.

But France is near
To Spain. There's refuge there.

DON CARLOS.

But I shall be
The Emperor of Germany, and you
Under the empire's ban shall be.

HERNANI.

Ah, well!

I still shall have the remnant of the world,

From which to brave you — and with havens safe
O'er which you'll have no power.

DON CARLOS.

But when I've gain'd

The world?

HERNANI.

Then I shall have the grave.

DON CARLOS.

Your plots

So insolent I shall know how to thwart.

HERNANI.

Vengeance is lame, and comes with lagging steps,
But still it comes.

DON CARLOS (*with a half laugh of disdain*).

For touch of lady whom

The bandit loves!

HERNANI (*with flashing eyes*).

Dost thou remember, King,

I hold thee still? Make me not recollect
Oh, future Roman Cæsar, that despised
I have thee in my all too loyal hand,
And that I only need to close it now
To crush the egg of thy Imperial Eagle!

DON CARLOS.

Then do it.

HERNANI.

Get away.

[*He takes off his cloak, and throws
it on the shoulders of the KING.*

Go, fly, and take

This cloak to shield thee from some knife I fear
Among our ranks. [*The KING wraps himself in the cloak.*
At present safely go,

My thwarted vengeance for myself I keep.
It makes 'gainst every other hand thy life
Secure.

DON CARLOS.

And you who've spoken thus to me
Ask not for mercy on some future day.

[Exit DON CARLOS.]

SCENE 4.—HERNANI. DOÑA SOL.

DOÑA SOL (*seizing HERNANI's hand.*)

Now let us fly — be quick.

HERNANI.

It well becomes

You, loved one, in the trial hour to prove
Thus strong, unchangeable, and willing e'en
To th' end and depth of all to cling to me;
A noble wish, worthy a faithful soul!
But Thou, oh God, dost see that to accept
The joy that to my cavern she would bring —
The treasure of a beauty that a king
Now covets — and that Doña Sol to me
Should all belong — that she with me should 'bide,
And all our lives be joined — that this should be
Without regret, remorse — it is too late.
The scaffold is too near.

DOÑA SOL.

What is't you say?

HERNANI.

This King, whom to his face just now I braved,
Will punish me for having dared to show
Him mercy. He already, perhaps, has reached
His palace, and is calling round him guards
And servants, his great lords, his headsmen —

DoÑA SOL.

Heavens!

Hernani! Oh, I shudder. Never mind,
Let us be quick and fly together then.

HERNANI.

Together! No; the hour has passed for that.
Alas! When to my eyes thou didst reveal
Thyself, so good and generous, deigning e'en
To love me with a helpful love, I could
But offer you — I, wretched one! — the hills,
The woods, the torrents, bread of the proscribed,
The bed of turf, all that the forest gives;
Thy pity then emboldened me — but now
To ask of thee to share the scaffold! No,
No, Doña Sol. That is for me alone.

DoÑA SOL.

And yet you promised even that!

HERNANI (*falling on his knees.*)

Angel!

At this same moment, when perchance from out
The shadow Death approaches, to wind up
All mournfully a life of mournfulness.
I do declare that here a man proscribed,
Enduring trouble great, profound — and rock'd
In blood-stained cradle — black as is the gloom
Which spreads o'er all my life, I still declare
I am a happy, to-be-envied man,
For you have loved me, and your love have owned!
For you have whispered blessings on my brow
Accursed!

DoÑA SOL (*leaning over his head.*)

Hernani!

HERNANI.

Praiséd be the fate

Sweet and propitious that for me now sets
This flower upon the precipice's brink! (*Raising himself.*)
'Tis not to you that I am speaking thus;
It is to Heaven that hears, and unto God.

DoÑA SOL.

Let me go with you.

HERNANI.

Ah, 'twould be a crime
To pluck the flower while falling in the abyss.
Go: I have breathed the perfume — 'tis enough.
Remould your life, by me so sadly marred.
This old man wed; 'tis I release you now.
To darkness I return. Be happy thou —
Be happy and forget.

DoÑA SOL.

No, I will have
My portion of thy shroud. I follow thee.
I hang upon thy steps.

HERNANI (*pressing her in his arms*).

Oh, let me go
Alone! Exiled — proscribed — a fearful man
Am I.

[*He quits her with a convulsive movement, and is going.*]

DoÑA SOL (*mournfully, and clasping her hands*).

Hernani, do you fly from me!

HERNANI (*returning*).

Well, then, no, no. You will it, and I stay.
Behold me! Come into my arms. I'll wait
As long as thou wilt have me. Let us rest,
Forgetting them.

[*He seats her on a bench.*]

Be seated on this stone.

[*He places himself at her feet.*]

The liquid light of your eyes inundates
Mine own. Sing me some song, such as sometimes

You used at eve to warble, with the tears
In those dark orbs. Let us be happy now,
And drink; the cup is full. This hour is ours,
The rest is only folly. Speak and say,
Enrapture me. Is it not sweet to love,
And know that he who kneels before you loves?
To be but two alone? Is it not sweet
To speak of love in stillness of the night
When nature rests? Oh, let me slumber now,
And on thy bosom dream. Oh, Doña Sol,
My love, my darling! [Noise of bells in the distance.

Doña SOL (*starting up frightened*).
Tocsin! — dost thou hear?

The tocsin!

Hernani (*still kneeling at her feet*).
Eh! No, 'tis our bridal bell

They're ringing.

[The noise increases. Confused cries. Lights at all the
windows, on the roofs, and in the streets.

Doña SOL.
Rise — oh, fly — great God! the town

Lights up!

Hernani (*half rising*).
A torchlight wedding for us 'tis!

Doña SOL.
The nuptials these of Death, and of the tombs!
[Noise of swords and cries.

Hernani (*lying down on the stone bench*).
Let us to sleep again.

A MOUNTAINEER (*rushing in, sword in hand*).
The runners, sir.

The alcadés rush out in cavalcades
With mighty force. Be quick — my Captain,— quick.
[Hernani rises.

DoÑA SOL (*pale*).

Ah, thou wert right!

THE MOUNTAINEER.

Oh, help us!

HERNANI (*to MOUNTAINEER*).

It is well —

I'm ready. (*Confused cries outside.*)

Death to the bandit!

HERNANI (*to MOUNTAINEER*).

Quick, thy sword —

(*To DoÑA SOL.*)

Farewell!

DoÑA SOL.

'Tis I have been thy ruin! Oh,
Where can'st thou go? (*Pointing to the little door.*)

The door is free. Let us

Escape that way.

HERNANI.

Heavens! Desert my friends!

What dost thou say?

DoÑA SOL.

These clamours terrify.

Remember, if thou diest I must die.

HERNANI (*holding her in his arms*).

A kiss!

DoÑA SOL.

Hernani! Husband! Master mine!

HERNANI (*kissing her forehead*).

Alas! it is the first!

DoÑA SOL.

Perchance the last!

[HERNANI *exit*. *She falls on the bench.*]

THIRD ACT: THE OLD MAN

THE CASTLE OF SILVA.

In the midst of the Mountains of Aragon.

SCENE 1.—*The gallery of family portraits of Silva; a great hall of which these portraits — surrounded with rich frames, and surmounted by ducal coronets and gilt escutcheons — form the decoration. At the back a lofty gothic door. Between the portraits complete panoplies of armour of different centuries.*

DoÑA SOL, *pale, and standing near a table.*

DON RUY GOMEZ DE SILVA, *seated in his great carved oak chair.*

DON RUY GOMEZ.

At last the day has come! — and in an hour
Thou'lt be my Duchess, and embrace me! Not
Thine Uncle then! But hast thou pardoned me?
That I was wrong I own. I raised thy blush,
I made thy cheek turn pale. I was too quick
With my suspicions — should have stayed to hear
Before condemning; but appearances
Should take the blame. Unjust we were. Certes
The two young handsome men were there. But then —
No matter — well I know that I should not
Have credited my eyes. But, my poor child,
What would'st thou with the old?

DoÑA SOL (*seriously, and without moving*).

You ever talk

Of this. Who is there blames you?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I myself,

I should have known that such a soul as yours
Never has galants; when 'tis Doña Sol,
And when good Spanish blood is in her veins.

DoÑA SOL.

Truly, my Lord, 'tis good and pure; perchance
'Twill soon be seen.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*rising, and going towards her*).

Now list. One cannot be

The master of himself, so much in love
As I am now with thee. And I am old
And jealous, and am cross — and why? Because
I'm old; because the beauty, grace or youth
Of others frightens, threatens me. Because
While jealous thus of others, of myself
I am ashamed. What mockery! that this love
Which to the heart brings back such joy and warmth,
Should halt, and but rejuvenate the soul,
Forgetful of the body. When I see
A youthful peasant, singing blithe and gay,
In the green meadows, often then I muse —
I, in my dismal paths, and murmur low:
“Oh, I would give my battlemented towers,
And ancient ducal donjon, and my fields
Of corn, and all my forest lands, and flocks
So vast which feed upon my hills, my name,
And all my ancient titles — ruins mine,
And ancestors who must expect me soon,
All — all I'd give for his new cot, and brow
Unwrinkled. For his hair is raven black,
And his eyes shine like yours. Beholding him

You might exclaim: A young man this! And then
Would think of me so old." I know it well.
I am named Silva. Ah, but that is not
Enough; I say it, see it. Now behold
To what excess I love thee. All I'd give
Could I be like thee — young and handsome now!
Vain dream! that I were young again, who must
By long, long years precede thee to the tomb.

DoÑA SOL.

Who knows?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And yet, I pray you, me believe,
The frivolous swains have not so much of love
Within their hearts as on their tongues. A girl
May love and trust one; if she dies for him,
He laughs. The strong-winged and gay-painted birds
That warble sweet, and in the thicket trill,
Will change their loves as they their plumage moult.
They are the old, with voice and colour gone,
And beauty fled, who have the resting wings
We love the best. Our steps are slow, and dim
Our eyes. Our brows are furrowed,— but the heart
Is never wrinkled. When an old man loves
He should be spared. The heart is ever young,
And always it can bleed. This love of mine
Is not a plaything made of glass to shake
And break. It is a love severe and sure,
Solid, profound, paternal,— strong as is
The oak which forms my ducal chair. See then
How well I love thee — and in other ways
I love thee — hundred other ways, e'en as
We love the dawn, and flowers, and heaven's blue!
To see thee, mark thy graceful step each day,
Thy forehead pure, thy brightly beaming eye,
I'm joyous — feeling that my soul will have
Perpetual festival!

DoÑA SOL.

Alas!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And then,

Know you how much the world admires, applauds,
A woman, angel pure, and like a dove,
When she an old man comforts and consoles
As he is tott'ring to the marble tomb,
Passing away by slow degrees as she
Watches and shelters him, and condescends
To bear with him, the useless one, that seems
But fit to die? It is a sacred work
And worthy of all praise — effort supreme
Of a devoted heart to comfort him
Unto the end, and without loving perhaps,
To act as if she loved. Ah, thou to me
Wilt be this angel with a woman's heart
Who will rejoice the old man's soul again
And share his latter years, and by respect
A daughter be, and by your pity like
A sister prove.

DoÑA SOL.

Far from preceding me,

'Tis likely me you'll follow to the grave.
My lord, because that we are young is not
A reason we should live. Alas! I know
And tell you, often old men tarry long,
And see the young go first, their eyes shut fast
By sudden stroke, as on a sepulchre
That still was open falls the closing stone.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Oh cease, my child, such saddening discourse,
Or I shall scold you. Such a day as this
Sacred and joyous is. And, by-the-bye,
Time summons us. Are you not ready yet

For chapel when we're called? Be quick to don
The bridal dress. Each moment do I count.

DoÑA SOL.

There is abundant time.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Oh no, there's not.

(*Enter a PAGE.*)

What want you?

THE PAGE.

At the door, my lord, a man —

A pilgrim — beggar — or I know not what,
Is craving here a shelter.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Let him in

Whoever he may be. Good enters with
The stranger that we welcome. What's the news
From th' outside world? What of the bandit chief
That filled our forests with his rebel band?

THE PAGE.

Hernani, Lion of the mountains, now
Is done for.

DoÑA SOL (*aside*).

God!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*to the Page*).

How so?

THE PAGE.

The troop's destroyed.

The King himself has led the soldiers on.
Hernani's head a thousand crowns is worth
Upon the spot; but now he's dead, they say.

DoÑA SOL (*aside*).

What! Without me, Hernani!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

And thank Heaven!

So he is dead, the rebel! Now, dear love,
We can rejoice; go then and deck thyself,
My pride, my darling. Day of double joy.

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, mourning robes!

[*Exit DOÑA SOL.*]

DON RUY GOMEZ (*to the Page*).

The casket quickly send

That I'm to give her. [*He seats himself in his chair.*]

'Tis my longing now

To see her all adorned Madonna like.

With her bright eyes, and aid of my rich gems

She will be beautiful enough to make

A pilgrim kneel before her. As for him

Who asks asylum, bid him enter here.

Excuses from us offer; run, be quick.

[*The PAGE bows and exit.*]

'Tis ill to keep a guest long waiting thus.

[*The door at the back opens. HERNANI appears disguised as a Pilgrim. The DUKE rises.*]

SCENE 2.—DON RUY GOMEZ. HERNANI.

(HERNANI *pauses at the threshold of the door*).

HERNANI.

My lord, peace and all happiness be yours!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*saluting him with his hand*).

To thee be peace and happiness, my guest!

[*HERNANI enters. The DUKE reseats himself.*]

Art thou a pilgrim?

HERNANI (*bowing*).

Yes.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

No doubt you come

From Armillas?

HERNANI.

Not so. I hither came

By other road, there was some fighting there.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Among the troop of bandits, was it not?

HERNANI.

I know not.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

What's become of him — the chief

They call Hernani? Dost thou know?

HERNANI.

My lord,

Who is this man?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Dost thou not know him then?

For thee so much the worse! Thou wilt not gain
The good round sum. See you a rebel he
That has been long unpunished. To Madrid
Should you be going, perhaps you'll see him hanged.

HERNANI.

I go not there.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A price is on his head

For any man who takes him.

HERNANI (*aside*).

Let one come!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Whither, good pilgrim, goest thou?

HERNANI.

My lord,

I'm bound for Saragossa.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A vow made

In honour of a Saint, or of Our Lady?

HERNANI.

Yes, of Our Lady, Duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Of the Pillar?

HERNANI.

Of the Pillar.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

We must be soulless quite

Not to acquit us of the vows we make

Unto the Saints. But thine accomplished, then

Hast thou not other purposes in view?

Or is to see the Pillar all you wish?

HERNANI.

Yes. I would see the lights and candles burn,

And at the end of the dim corridor

Our Lady in her glowing shrine, with cope

All golden — then would satisfied return.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Indeed, that's well. Brother, what is thy name?

Mine, Ruy de Silva is.

HERNANI (*hesitating*).

My name —

DON RUY GOMEZ.

You can

Conceal it if you will. None here has right

To know it. Cam'st thou to asylum ask?

HERNANI.

Yes, duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Remain, and know thou'rt welcome here.

For nothing want; and as for what thou'rt named,

But call thyself my guest. It is enough

Whoever thou may'st be. Without demur

I'd take in Satan if God sent him me.

[The folding doors at the back open. Enter Doña SOL in nuptial attire. Behind her Pages and Lackeys, and two women carrying on a velvet cushion a casket of engraved silver, which they place upon a table, and which contains a jewel case, with Duchess's coronet, necklaces, bracelets, pearls, and diamonds in profusion. HERNANI, breathless and scared, looks at Doña SOL with flaming eyes without listening to the DUKE.]

SCENE 3.—*The Same:* DOÑA SOL, PAGES, LACKEYS,
WOMEN.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*continuing*).

Behold my blessed Lady — to have prayed

To her will bring thee happiness.

[He offers his hand to Doña SOL, still pale and grave.]

Come then,

My bride. What! not thy coronet, nor ring!

HERNANI (*in a voice of thunder*).

Who wishes now a thousand golden crowns

To win?

[All turn to him astonished. He tears off his Pilgrim's robe, and crushes it under his feet, revealing himself in the dress of a Mountaineer.]

I am Hernani.

DoÑA SOL (*joyfully*).

Heavens! Oh,

He lives!

HERNANI (*to the Lackeys*).

See! I'm the man they seek.

(*To the DUKE.*)

You wished

To know my name — Diego or Perez?

No, No! I have a grander name — Hernani.

Name of the banished, the proscribed. See you

This head? 'Tis worth enough of gold to pay

For festival. (*To the Lackeys.*)

I give it to you all.

Take; tie my hands, my feet. But there's no need,

The chain that binds me 's one I shall not break.

DoÑA SOL (*aside*).

Oh misery!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Folly! This my guest is mad —

A lunatic!

HERNANI.

Your guest a bandit is.

DoÑA SOL.

Oh, do not heed him.

HERNANI.

What I say is truth.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

A thousand golden crowns — the sum is large.

And, sir, I will not answer now for all

My people.

HERNANI.

And so much the better, should

A willing one be found. (*To the Lackeys.*)

Now seize, and sell me!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*trying to silence him*).
Be quiet, or they'll take you at your word.

HERNANI.

Friends, this your opportunity is good.
I tell you, I'm the rebel — the proscribed
Hernani!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Silence!

HERNANI.

I am he!

DOÑA SOL (*in a low voice to him*).

Be still!

HERNANI (*half turning to Doña Sol*).
There's marrying here! My spouse awaits me too.
(*To the Duke.*)

She is less beautiful, my Lord, than yours,
But not less faithful. She is Death. (*To the Lackeys.*)
Not one

Of you has yet come forth!

DOÑA SOL (*in a low voice*).

For pity's sake!

HERNANI (*to the Lackeys*).
A thousand golden crowns. Hernani here!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

This is the demon!

HERNANI (*to a young Lackey*).

Come! thou'lt earn this sum,
Then rich, thou wilt from lackey change again
To man. (*To the other Lackeys, who do not stir.*)
And also you — you waver. Ah,
Have I not misery enough?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My friend,

To touch thy life they'd peril each his own.

Wert thou Hernani, or a hundred times

As bad, I must protect my guest,— were e'en

An Empire offered for his life — against

The King himself; for thee I hold from God.

If hair of thine be injured, may I die. (*To Doña Sol.*)

My niece, who in an hour will be my wife,

Go to your room. I am about to arm

The Castle — shut the gates. [*Exit, followed by servants.*]

HERNANI (*looking with despair at his empty girdle*).

Not e'en a knife!

[*Doña Sol, after the departure of the Duke, takes a few steps, as if to follow her women, then pauses, and when they are gone, comes back to HERNANI with anxiety.*]

SCENE 4.—HERNANI. DOÑA SOL.

HERNANI *looks at the nuptial jewel-case with a cold and apparently indifferent gaze; then he tosses back his head, and his eyes light up.*

HERNANI.

Accept my 'gratulations! Words tell not

How I'm enchanted by these ornaments.

[*He approaches the casket.*]

This ring is in fine taste,— the coronet

I like,— the necklace shows surpassing skill.

The bracelet's rare — but oh, a hundred times

Less so than she, who 'neath a forehead pure

Conceals a faithless heart. [*Examining the casket again.*]

What for all this

Have you now given? Of your love some share?

But that for nothing goes! Great God! to thus

Deceive, and still to live and have no shame!

[*Looking at the jewels.*]

But after all, perchance, this pearl is false,
And copper stands for gold, and glass and lead
Make out sham diamonds — pretended gems!
Are these false sapphires and false jewels all?
If so, thy heart is like them, Duchess false,
Thyself but only gilded.

[*He returns to the casket.*]

Yet, no, no!

They all are real, beautiful, and good,
He dares not cheat, who stands so near the tomb.
Nothing is wanting.

[*He takes up one thing after another.*]

Necklaces are here,
And brilliant earrings, and the Duchess' crown
And golden ring. Oh marvel! Many thanks
For love so certain, faithful and profound.
The precious box!

DoÑA SOL (*She goes to the casket, feels in it, and draws forth a dagger*).

You have not reached its depths.

This is the dagger which, by kindly aid
Of patron saint, I snatched from Charles the King
When he made offer to me of a throne,
Which I refused for you, who now insult me.

HERNANI (*falling at her feet*).

Oh, let me on my knees arrest those tears,
The tears that beautify thy sorrowing eyes.
Then after thou canst freely take my life.

DoÑA SOL.

I pardon you, Hernani. In my heart
There is but love for you.

HERNANI.

And she forgives —
And loves me still! But who can also teach

Me to forgive myself, that I have used
Such words? Angel, for heaven reserved, say where
You trod, that I may kiss the ground.

DOÑA SOL.

My love!

HERNANI.

Oh no, I should to thee be odious.
But listen. Say again — I love thee still!
Say it, and reassure a heart that doubts.
Say it, for often with such little words
A woman's tongue hath cured a world of woes.

DOÑA SOL (*absorbed, and without hearing him*).
To think my love had such short memory!
That all these so ignoble men could shrink
A heart, where his name was enthroned, to love
By them thought worthier.

HERNANI.

Alas! I have

Blasphemed! If I were in thy place I should
Be weary of the furious madman, who
Can only pity after he has struck.
I'd bid him go. Drive me away, I say,
And I will bless thee, for thou hast been good
And sweet. Too long thou hast myself endured,
For I am evil; I should blacken still
Thy days with my dark nights. At last it is
Too much; thy soul is lofty, beautiful,
And pure; if I am evil, is't thy fault?
Marry the old duke then, for he is good
And noble. By the mother's side he has
Olmédo, by his father's Alcala.
With him be rich and happy by one act.
Know you not what this generous hand of mine
Can offer thee of splendour? Ah, alone
A dowry of misfortune, and the choice

Of blood or tears. Exile, captivity
And death, and terrors that environ me.
These are thy necklaces and jewelled crown.
Never elated bridegroom to his bride
Offered a casket filled more lavishly,
But 'tis with misery and mournfulness.
Marry the old man — he deserves thee well!
Ah, who could ever think my head proscribed
Fit mate for forehead pure? What looker-on
That saw thee calm and beautiful, me rash
And violent — thee peaceful, like a flower
Growing in shelter, me by tempests dash'd
On rocks unnumber'd — who could dare to say
That the same law should guide our destinies?
No, God, who ruleth all things well, did not
Make thee for me. No right from Heav'n above
Have I to thee; and I'm resigned to fate.
I have thy heart; it is a theft! I now
Unto a worthier yield it. Never yet
Upon our love has Heaven smiled; 'tis false
If I have said thy destiny it was.
To vengeance and to love I bid adieu!
My life is ending; useless I will go,
And take away with me my double dream,
Ashamed I could not punish, nor could charm.
I have been made for hate, who only wished
To love. Forgive and fly me, these my prayers
Reject them not, since they will be my last.
Thou livest — I am dead. I see not why
Thou should'st immure thee in my tomb.

DoÑA SOL.

Ingrate!

HERNANI.

Mountains of old Aragon! Galicia!
Estremadura! Unto all who come
Around me I bring misery! Your sons,

The best, without remorse I've ta'en to fight,
And now behold them dead! The bravest brave
Of all Spain's sons lie, soldier-like, upon
The hills, their backs to earth, the living God
Before; and if their eyes could ope they'd look
On heaven's blue. See what I do to all
Who join me! Is it fortune any one
Should covet? Doña Sol, oh! take the Duke,
Take hell, or take the King — all would be well,
All must be better than myself, I say.
No longer have I friend to think of me,
And it is fully time that thy turn comes,
For I must be alone. Fly from me then,
From my contagion. Make not faithful love
A duty of religion! Fly from me,
For pity's sake. Thou think'st me, perhaps, a man
Like others, one with sense, who knows the end
At which he aims, and acts accordingly.
Oh, undeceive thyself. I am a force
That cannot be resisted — agent blind
And deaf of mournful mysteries! A soul
Of misery made of gloom. Where shall I go?
I cannot tell. But I am urged, compelled
By an impetuous breath and wild decree;
I fall, and fall, and cannot stop descent.
If sometimes breathless I dare turn my head,
A voice cries out, "Go on!" and the abyss
Is deep, and to the depths I see it red
With flame or blood! Around my fearful course
All things break up — all die. Woe be to them
Who touch me. Fly, I say! Turn thee away
From my so fatal path. Alas! without
Intending I should do thee ill.

Doña Sol.

Great God!

Hernani.

My demon is a formidable one.

But there's a thing impossible to it —
My happiness. For thee is happiness.
Therefore go seek another lord, for thou
Art not for me. If Heaven, that my fate
Abjures, should smile on me, believe it not:
It would be irony. Marry the Duke!

DoÑA SOL.

'Twas not enough to tear my heart, but you
Must break it now! Ah me! no longer then
You love me!

HERNANI.

Oh! my heart — its very life
Thou art! The glowing hearth whence all warmth comes
Art thou! Wilt thou then blame me that I fly
From thee, adored one?

DoÑA SOL.

No, I blame thee not,
Only I know that I shall die of it.

HERNANI.

Die! And for what? For me? Can it then be
That thou should'st die for cause so small?

DoÑA SOL (*bursting into tears*).

Enough.

[*She falls into a chair.*]

HERNANI (*seating himself near her*).

And thou art weeping; and 'tis still my fault!
And who will punish me? for thou I know
Wilt pardon still! Who, who can tell thee half
The anguish that I suffer when a tear
Of thine obscures and drowns those radiant eyes
Whose lustre is my joy. My friends are dead!
Oh, I am crazed — forgive me — I would love
I know not how. Alas! I love with love
Profound. Weep not — the rather let us die!

Oh that I had a world to give to thee!
Oh, wretched, miserable man I am!

DoÑA SOL (*throwing herself on his neck*).
You are my lion, generous and superb!
I love you.

HERNANI.
Ah, this love would be a good
Supreme, if we could die of too much love!

DoÑA SOL.
Thou art my lord! I love thee and belong
To thee!

HERNANI (*letting his head fall on her shoulder*).
How sweet would be a poignard stroke
From thee!

DoÑA SOL (*entreatingly*).
Fear you not God will punish you
For words like these?

HERNANI (*still leaning on her shoulder*).
Well, then, let Him unite us!
I have resisted; thou would'st have it thus.

[*While they are in each other's arms, absorbed and gazing with ecstasy at each other, DON RUY GOMEZ enters by the door at the back of the stage. He sees them, and stops on the threshold as if petrified.*

SCENE 5.—HERNANI. DOÑA SOL. DON RUY GOMEZ.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*motionless on the threshold, with arms crossed*).

And this is the requital that I find
Of hospitality!

DOÑA SOL.

Oh Heavens — the Duke!

[*Both turn as if awakening with a start.*]

DON RUY GOMEZ (*still motionless*).

This, then's the recompense from thee, my guest?
Good duke, go see if all thy walls be high,
And if the door is closed, and archer placed
Within his tower, and go the castle round
Thyself for us; seek in thine arsenal
For armour that will fit — at sixty years
Resume thy battle-harness — and then see
The loyalty with which we will repay
Such service! Thou for us do thus, and we
Do this for thee! Oh, blessed saints of Heaven!
Past sixty years I've lived, and met sometimes
Unbridled souls; and oft my dirk have drawn
From out its scabbard, raising on my path
The hangman's game birds: murd'ers I have seen
And coiners, traitorous varlets poisoning
Their masters; and I've seen men die without
A prayer, or sight of crucifix. I've seen
Sforza and Borgia; Luther still I see,
But never have I known perversity
So great that feared not thunder bolt, its host
Betraying! 'Twas not of my age — such foul
Black treason, that at once could petrify
An old man on the threshold of his door,

And make the master, waiting for his grave,
Look like his statue ready for his tomb.
Moors and Castilians! Tell me, who's this man?

(He raises his eyes and looks round on the portraits on the wall.)

Oh you, the Silvas who can hear me now,
Forgive if, in your presence by my wrath
Thus stirr'd, I say that hospitality
Was ill advised.

HERNANI *(rising)*.

Duke ——

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Silence!

[He makes three steps into the hall looking at the portraits of the SILVAS.]

Sacred dead!

My ancestors! Ye men of steel, who know
What springs from heav'n or hell, reveal, I say,
Who is this man? No, not Hernani he,
But Judas is his name — oh, try to speak
And tell me who he is! *(Crossing his arms.)*

In all your days

Saw you aught like him? No.

HERNANI.

My lord ——

DON RUY GOMEZ *(still addressing the portraits)*.

See you

The shameless miscreant? He would speak to me,
But better far than I you read his soul.
Oh, heed him not! he is a knave — he'd say
That he foresaw that in the tempest wild
Of my great wrath I brooded o'er some deed
Of gory vengeance shameful to my roof.
A sister deed to that they call the feast

Of Seven Heads.¹ He'll tell you he's proscribed,
He'll tell you that of Silva they will talk
E'en as of Lara. Afterwards he'll say
He is my guest and yours. My lords, my sires,
Is the fault mine? Judge you between us now.

HERNANI.

Ruy Gomez de Silva, if ever 'neath
The heavens clear a noble brow was raised,
If ever heart was great and soul was high,
Yours are, my lord; and oh, my noble host,
I, who now speak to you, alone have sinn'd.
Guilty most damnably am I, without
Extenuating word to say. I would
Have carried off thy bride — dishonour'd thee.
'Twas infamous. I live; but now my life
I offer unto thee. Take it. Thy sword
Then wipe, and think no more about the deed.

DOÑA SOL.

My lord, 'twas not his fault — strike only me.

HERNANI.

Be silent, Doña Sol. This hour supreme
Belongs alone to me; nothing I have
But it. Let me explain things to the Duke.
Oh, Duke, believe the last words from my mouth,
I swear that I alone am guilty. But
Be calm and rest assured that she is pure,

¹ This allusion is to the seven brothers who were slain by the treachery of their uncle Ruy Velasquez. According to a note prefixed by Lockhart to the ballad on this subject, "After the seven Infants were slain, Almanzor, King of Cordova, invited his prisoner, Gonzalo Gustio, to feast with him in his palace; but when the Baron of Lara came in obedience to the royal invitation, he found the heads of his sons set forth in chargers on the table. The old man reproached the Moorish king bitterly for the cruelty and baseness of this proceeding, and suddenly snatching a sword from the side of one of the royal attendants, sacrificed to his wrath, ere he could be disarmed and fettered, thirteen of the Moors who surrounded the person of Almanzor."—TRANS.

That's all. I guilty and she pure. Have faith
In her. A sword or dagger thrust for me.
Then throw my body out of doors, and have
The flooring washed, if you should will it so.
What matter?

DoÑA SOL.

Ah! I only am the cause
Of all; because I love him.

[DON RUY turns round trembling at these words, and
fixes on DoÑA SOL a terrible look. She throws her-
self at his feet.

Pardon! Yes,

My lord, I love him!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Love him — you love him!

(To HERNANI.)

Tremble! [Noise of trumpets outside. Enter a PAGE.
What is this noise?

THE PAGE.

It is the King,

My lord, in person, with a band complete
Of archers, and his herald, who now sounds.

DoÑA SOL.

Oh God! This last fatality — the King!

THE PAGE (to the DUKE).

He asks the reason why the door is closed,
And order gives to open it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Admit

The King.

[The PAGE bows and exit.

DoÑA SOL.

He's lost!

[DON RUY GOMEZ goes to one of the portraits — that of himself and the last on the left; he presses a spring, and the portrait opens out like a door, and reveals a hiding-place in the wall. He turns to HERNANI.
Come hither, sir.

HERNANI.

My life

To thee is forfeit; and to yield it up
I'm ready. I thy prisoner am.

[He enters the recess. DON RUY again presses the spring, and the portrait springs back to its place looking as before.

DOÑA SOL.

My lord,

Have pity on him!

THE PAGE (*entering*).

His Highness the King!

[DOÑA SOL hurriedly lowers her veil. The folding-doors open. Enter DON CARLOS in military attire, followed by a crowd of gentlemen equally armed with halberds, arquebuses, and cross-bows.

SCENE 6.—DON RUY GOMEZ, DOÑA SOL veiled, DON CARLOS and Followers.

DON CARLOS advances slowly, his left hand on the hilt of his sword, his right hand in his bosom, and looking at the DUKE with anger and defiance. The DUKE goes before the KING and bows low. Silence. Expectation and terror on all. At last the KING, coming opposite the DUKE, throws back his head haughtily.

DON CARLOS.

How comes it then, my cousin, that to-day

Thy door is strongly barr'd? By all the Saints
 I thought your dagger had more rusty grown,
 And know not why, when I'm your visitor,
 It should so haste to brightly shine again
 All ready to your hand.

(DON RUY GOMEZ *attempts to speak, but the KING continues with an imperious gesture.*)

Late in the day

It is for you to play the young man's part!
 Do we come turban'd? Tell me, are we named
 Boabdil or Mahomet, and not Charles,
 That the portcullis 'gainst us you should lower
 And raise the drawbridge?

DON RUY GOMEZ (*bowing*).

Highness —

DON CARLOS (*to his gentlemen*).

Take the keys

And guard the doors.

[*Two officers exeunt. Several others arrange the soldiers in a triple line in the hall from the KING to the principal door. DON CARLOS turns again to the DUKE.*]

Ah! you would wake to life

Again these crushed rebellions. By my faith,
 If you, ye Dukes, assume such airs as these
 The King himself will play his kingly part,
 Traverse the mountains in a warlike mode,
 And in their battlemented nests will slay
 The lordlings!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*drawing himself up*).

Ever have the Silvas been,

Your Highness, loyal.

DON CARLOS (*interrupting him*).

Without subterfuge

Reply, or to the ground I'll raze thy towers

Eleven! Of extinguished fire remains
One spark — of brigands dead the chief survives,
And who conceals him? It is thou, I say!
Hernani, rebel-ringleader, is here,
And in thy castle thou dost hide him now.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Highness, it is quite true.

DON CARLOS.

Well, then, his head

I want — or if not, thine. Dost understand,
My cousin?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Well, then, be it so. You shall

Be satisfied.

[DoÑA SOL *hides her face in her hands and sinks into the arm-chair.*

DON CARLOS (*a little softened*).

Ah! you repent. Go seek

Your prisoner.

[*The DUKE crosses his arms, lowers his head, and remains some moments pondering. The KING and DoÑA SOL, agitated by contrary emotions, observe him in silence. At last the DUKE looks up, goes to the KING, takes his hand, and leads him with slow steps towards the oldest of the portraits, which is where the gallery commences to the right of the spectator.*

DON RUY GOMEZ (*pointing out the old portrait to the KING*).

This is the eldest one,

The great forefather of the Silva race,

Don Silvius our ancestor, three times

Was he made Roman consul.

(*Passing to the next portrait.*)

This is he

Don Galceran de Silva — other Cid!
 They keep his body still at Toro, near
 Valladolid; a thousand candles burn
 Before his gilded shrine. 'Twas he who freed
 Leon from tribute o' the hundred virgins.¹

(Passing to another.)

Don Blas — who, in contrition for the fault
 Of having ill-advised the king, exiled
 Himself of his own will. *(To another.)*

This Christoval!

At fight of Escalon, when fled on foot
 The King Don Sancho, whose white plume was mark
 For general deadly aim, he cried aloud,
 Oh, Christoval! And Christoval assumed
 The plume, and gave his horse. *(To another.)*

This is Don Jorge,

Who paid the ransom of Ramire, the King
 Of Aragon.

DON CARLOS *(crossing his arms and looking at him from head
 to foot).*

By Heavens now, Don Ruy,
 I marvel at you! But go on.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Next comes

Don Ruy Gomez Silva, he was made
 Grand Master of St. James, and Calatrava.
 His giant armour would not suit our heights.
 He took three hundred flags from foes, and won
 In thirty battles. For the King Motril
 He conquer'd Antequera, Suez,
 Nijar; and died in poverty. Highness,
 Salute him.

¹ A yearly tribute exacted by the Moors after one of their victories. One of the fine Spanish ballads translated by Lockhart is on this subject.—TRANS.

[*He bows, uncovers, and passes to another portrait. The KING listens impatiently, and with increasing anger.*

Next him is his son, named Gil,
Dear to all noble souls. His promise worth
The oath of royal hands. (*To another.*)

Don Gaspard this,
The pride alike of Mendocé and Silva.
Your Highness, every noble family
Has some alliance with the Silva race.
Sandoval has both trembled at, and wed
With us. Manrique is envious of us: Lara
Is jealous. Alencastre hates us. We
All dukes surpass, and mount to Kings.

DON CARLOS.

Tut! tut!

You're jesting.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Here behold Don Vasquez, called
The Wise. Don Jayme surnamed the Strong. One day
Alone he stopped Zamet and five score Moors.
I pass them by, and some the greatest.

[*At an angry gesture of the KING he passes by a great number of portraits, and speedily comes to the three last at the left of the audience.*

This,
My grandfather, who lived to sixty years,
Keeping his promised word even to Jews.
(*To the last portrait but one.*)

This venerable form my father is,
A sacred head. Great was he, though he comes
The last. The Moors had taken prisoner
His friend Count Alvar Giron. But my sire
Set out to seek him with six hundred men
To war inured. A figure of the Count
Cut out of stone by his decree was made

And dragged along behind the soldiers, he,
By patron saint, declaring that until
The Count of stone itself turned back and fled,
He would not falter; on he went and saved
His friend.

DON CARLOS.
I want my prisoner.

DON RUY GOMEZ. This was

A Gomez de Silva. Imagine — judge
What in this dwelling one must say who sees
These heroes —

DON CARLOS.
Instantly — my prisoner!

DON RUY GOMEZ.
[He bows low before the KING, takes his hand, and leads him to the last portrait, which serves for the door of HERNANI'S hiding-place. DOÑA SOL watches him with anxious eyes. Silence and expectation in all.]

This portrait is my own. Mercy! King Charles!
For you require that those who see it here
Should say, "This last, the worthy son of race
Heroic, was a traitor found, that sold
The life of one he sheltered as a guest!"

[Joy of DOÑA SOL. Movement of bewilderment in the crowd. The KING disconcerted moves away in anger, and remains some moments with lips trembling and eyes flashing.]

DON CARLOS.
Your Castle, Duke, annoys me, I shall lay
It low.

DON RUY GOMEZ.
Thus, Highness, you'd retaliate,
Is it not so?

DON CARLOS.

For such audacity
Your towers I'll level with the ground, and have
Upon the spot the hemp-seed sown.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I'd see
The hemp spring freely up where once my towers
Stood high, rather than stain should eat into
The ancient name of Silva. (*To the portraits.*)
Is 't not true?

I ask it of you all.

DON CARLOS.

Now, Duke, this head,
'Tis ours, and thou hast promised it to me.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I promised one or other. (*To the portraits.*)
Was 't not so?

I ask you all? (*Pointing to his head.*)
This one I give. (*To the KING.*)
Take it.

DON CARLOS.

Duke, many thanks; but 'twould not do. The head
I want is young; when dead the headsman must
Uplift it by the hair. But as for thine,
In vain he'd seek, for thou hast not enough
For him to clutch.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Highness, insult me not.
My head is noble still, and worth far more
Than any rebel's poll. The head of Silva
You thus despise!

DON CARLOS.

Give up Hernani!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I

Have spoken, Highness.

DON CARLOS. (*To his followers.*)

Search you everywhere
From roof to cellar, that he takes not wing ——

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My keep is faithful as myself; alone
It shares the secret which we both shall guard
Right well.

DON CARLOS.

I am the King!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Out of my house
Demolished stone by stone, they'll only make
My tomb,— and nothing gain.

DON CARLOS.

Menace I find
And prayer alike are vain. Deliver up
The bandit, Duke, or head and castle both
Will I beat down.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I've said my word.

DON CARLOS.

Well, then,
Instead of one head I'll have two.
(*To the DUKE D'ALCALA.*)

You, Jorge,
Arrest the Duke.

DoÑA SOL (*she plucks off her veil and throws herself between
the KING, the DUKE, and the Guards.*)

King Charles, an evil king

Are you!

DON CARLOS.

Good heavens! Is it Doña Sol

I see?

DoÑA SOL.

Highness! Thou hast no Spaniard's heart!

DON CARLOS (*confused*).

Madam, you are severe upon the King.

[*He approaches her, and speaks low.*

'Tis you have caused the wrath that's in my heart.

A man approaching you perforce becomes

An angel or a monster. Ah, when we

Are hated, swiftly we malignant grow!

Perchance, if you had willed it so, young girl,

I'd noble been — the lion of Castile;

A tiger I am made by your disdain.

You hear it roaring now. Madam, be still!

[DoÑA SOL *looks at him.* *He bows.*

However, I'll obey. (*Turning to the DUKE.*)

Cousin, may be

Thy scruples are excusable, and I

Esteem thee. To thy guest be faithful still,

And faithless to thy King. I pardon thee.

'Tis better that I only take thy niece

Away as hostage.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Only!

DoÑA SOL.

Highness! Me!

DON CARLOS.

Yes, you.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Alone! Oh, wondrous clemency!

Oh, generous conqueror, that spares the head

To torture thus the heart! What mercy this!

DON CARLOS.

Choose 'twixt the traitor and the Doña Sol;
I must have one of them.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The master you!

[DON CARLOS approaches DOÑA SOL to lead her away.
She flies towards the DUKE.

DOÑA SOL.

Save me, my lord! (*She pauses.—Aside.*)

Oh misery! and yet

It must be so. My Uncle's life, or else

The other's! — rather mine! (*To the KING.*)

I follow you.

DON CARLOS (*aside*).

By all the Saints! the thought triumphant is!

Ah, in the end you'll soften, princess mine!

[DOÑA SOL goes with a grave and steady step to the casket, opens it, and takes from it the dagger, which she hides in her bosom. DON CARLOS comes to her and offers his hand.

DON CARLOS.

What is 't you're taking thence?

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, nothing!

DON CARLOS.

Is 't

Some precious jewel?

DOÑA SOL.

Yes.

DON CARLOS (*smiling*).

Show it to me.

DOÑA SOL.

Anon you'll see it.

[*She gives him her hand and prepares to follow him.*
DON RUY GOMEZ, who has remained motionless and
absorbed in thought, advances a few steps crying
out.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Heavens, Doña Sol!

Oh, Doña Sol! Since he is merciless,
Help! walls and armour come down on us now!

(*He runs to the KING.*)

Leave me my child! I have but her, oh King!

DON CARLOS (*dropping DOÑA SOL's hand*).

Then yield me up my prisoner.

[*The DUKE drops his head, and seems the prey of horrible indecision. Then he looks up at the portraits with supplicating hands before them.*

Oh, now

Have pity on me all of you!

[*He makes a step towards the hiding-place, DOÑA SOL watching him anxiously. He turns again to the portraits.*

Oh hide

Your faces! They deter me.

[*He advances with trembling steps towards his own portrait, then turns again to the KING.*

Is't your will?

DON CARLOS.

Yes.

[*The DUKE raises a trembling hand towards the spring.*

DOÑA SOL.

Oh God!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

No!

[*He throws himself on his knees before the KING.*
In pity take my life!

DON CARLOS.

Thy niece!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*rising*).

Take her and leave me honour then.

DON CARLOS (*seizing the hand of the trembling Doña SOL*)
Adieu, Duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Till we meet again!

[*He watches the KING, who retires slowly with Doña*

SOL. *Afterwards he puts his hand on his dagger.*

May God

Shield you!

[*He comes back to the front of the stage panting, and stands motionless, with vacant stare, seeming neither to see nor hear anything, his arms crossed on his heaving chest. Meanwhile the KING goes out with Doña SOL, the suite following two by two according to their rank. They speak in a low voice among themselves.*

DON RUY GOMEZ (*aside*).

Whilst thou go'st joyous from my house,

Oh King, my ancient loyalty goes forth

From out my bleeding heart.

[*He raises his head, looks all round, and sees that he is alone. Then he takes two swords from a panoply by the wall, measures them, and places them on a table. This done, he goes to the portrait, touches the spring, and the hidden door opens.*

SCENE 7.—DON RUY GOMEZ. HERNANI.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come out.

[HERNANI appears at the door of the hiding-place. DON RUY GOMEZ points to the two swords on the table.

Now choose.

Choose, for Don Carlos has departed now,
And it remains to give me satisfaction.

Choose, and be quick. What, then! trembles thy hand?

HERNANI.

A duel! Oh, it cannot be, old man,
'Twixt us.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Why not? Is it thou art afraid?

Or that thou art not noble? So or not,
All men who injure me, by hell I count
Noble enough to cross their swords with mine.

HERNANI.

Old man ——

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come forth, young man, to slay me, else

To be the slain.

HERNANI.

To die, ah yes! Against
My will thyself hast saved me, and my life
Is yours. I bid you take it.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

This you wish?

*(To the portraits).*You see he wills it. *(To HERNANI.)*

This is well. Thy prayer

Now make.

HERNANI.

It is to thee, my lord, the last

I make.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Pray to the other Lord.

HERNANI.

No, no,

To thee. Strike me, old man — dagger or sword —
Each one for me is good — but grant me first
One joy supreme. Duke, let me see her ere
I die.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

See her!

HERNANI.

Or at the least I beg

That you will let me hear her voice once more —
Only this one last time!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Hear her!

HERNANI.

Ah well,

My lord, I understand thy jealousy,
But death already seizes on my youth.
Forgive me. Grant me — tell me that without
Beholding her, if it must be, I yet
May hear her speak, and I will die to-night.
I'll grateful be to hear her. But in peace
I'd calmly die, if thou wouldst deign that ere
My soul is freed, it sees once more the soul
That shines so clearly in her eyes. To her
I will not speak. Thou shalt be there to see,
My father, and canst slay me afterwards.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*pointing to the recess still open*).
Oh, Saints of Heaven! can this recess then be
So deep and strong that he has nothing heard?

HERNANI.

No, I have nothing heard.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I was compelled
To yield up Doña Sol or thee.

HERNANI.

To whom?

DON RUY GOMEZ.

The King.

HERNANI.

Madman! He loves her.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Loves her! He!

HERNANI.

He takes her from us! He our rival is!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Curses be on him! Vassals! all to horse —
To horse! Let us pursue the ravisher!

HERNANI.

Listen! The vengeance that is sure of foot
Makes on its way less noise than this would do.
To thee I do belong. Thou hast the right
To slay me. Wilt thou not employ me first
As the avenger of thy niece's wrongs?
Let me take part in this thy vengeance due;
Grant me this boon, and I will kiss thy feet,
If so must be. Let us together speed
The King to follow. I will be thine arm.

I will avenge thee, Duke, and afterwards
The life that's forfeit thou shalt take.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

As now, thou'lt ready be to die? And then,

HERNANI.

Yes, Duke.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

By what wilt thou swear this?

HERNANI.

My father's head.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Of thine own self wilt thou remember it?

HERNANI (*giving him the horn which he takes from his girdle*).

Listen! Take you this horn, and whatsoe'er
May happen — what the place, or what the hour —
Whenever to thy mind it seems the time
Has come for me to die, blow on this horn
And take no other care; all will be done.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*offering his hand*).

Your hand!

[*They press hands.*]

(To the portraits.)

And all of you are witnesses.

FOURTH ACT

THE TOMB. AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

SCENE 1.—*The vaults which enclose the Tomb of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle.*¹ *Great arches of Lombard architecture, with semicircular columns, having capitals of birds and flowers. At the right a small bronze door, low and curved. A single lamp suspended from the crown of the vault shows the inscription: CAROLVS MAGNVS. It is night. One cannot see to the end of the vaults, the eye loses itself in the intricacy of arches, steps, and columns which mingle in the shade.*

DON CARLOS, DON RICARDO DE ROXAS, COMTE DE CASAPALMA, *lanterns in hand, and wearing large cloaks and slouched hats.*

DON RICARDO (*hat in hand*).

This is the place.

DON CARLOS.

Yes, here it is the League

Will meet; they that together in my power

¹ Charlemagne was buried, as Palgrave says, with circumstances of "ghastly magnificence." The embalmed corpse was seated "erect in his curule chair, clad in his silken robes, ponderous with broidery, pearls, and orfrey, the imperial diadem on his head, his closed eyelids covered, his face swathed in the dead-clothes, girt with his baldric, the ivory horn slung in his scarf, his good sword 'Joyeuse' by his side, the gospel-book open on his lap, musk and amber, and sweet spices poured around, his golden shield and golden sceptre pendant before him."

Charlemagne died A.D. 814. Twice or thrice, however, at long intervals, his tomb was opened; and three hundred years before the time of Charles the Fifth the remains were placed in a costly chest, which is still preserved in the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle.—TRANS.

So soon shall be. Oh, it was well, my lord
Of Trèves th' Elector — it was well of you
To lend this place; dark plots should prosper best
In the dank air of catacombs, and good
It is to sharpen daggers upon tombs.
Yet the stake's heavy — heads are on the game,
Ye bold assassins, and the end we'll see.
By heaven, 'twas well a sepulchre to choose
For such a business, since the road will be
Shorter for them to traverse. (*To DON RICARDO.*)
Tell me now

How far the subterranean way extends?

DON RICARDO.

To the strong fortress.

DON CARLOS.

Farther than we need.

DON RICARDO.

And on the other side it reaches quite
The Monastery of Altenheim.

DON CARLOS.

Ah, where

Lothaire was overcome by Rodolf. Once
Again, Count, tell me o'er their names and wrongs.

DON RICARDO.

Gotha.

DON CARLOS.

Ah, very well I know why 'tis
The brave Duke is conspirator: he wills
For Germany, a German Emperor.

DON RICARDO.

Hohenbourg.

DON CARLOS.

Hohenbourg would better like
With Francis hell, than Heaven itself with me.

DON RICARDO.

Gil Tellez Giron.

DON CARLOS.

Castile and our Lady!

The scoundrel! — to be traitor to his king!

DON RICARDO.

One evening it is said that you were found
With Madame Giron. You had just before
Made him a baron; he revenges now
The honour of his dear companion.

DON CARLOS.

This, then, the reason he revolts 'gainst Spain?
What name comes next?

DON RICARDO.

The Reverend Vasquez,

Avila's Bishop.

DON CARLOS.

Pray does he resent

Dishonour of his wife!

DON RICARDO.

Then there is named

Guzman de Lara, who is discontent,
Claiming the collar of your order.

DON CARLOS.

Ah!

Guzman de Lara! If he only wants
A collar he shall have one.

DON RICARDO.

Next the Duke

Of Lutzelbourg. As for his plans, they say —

DON CARLOS.

Ah! Lutzelbourg is by the head too tall.

DON RICARDO.

Juan de Haro — who Astorga wants.

DON CARLOS.

) These Haros! Always they the headsman's pay
Have doubled.

DON RICARDO.

That is all.

DON CARLOS.

Not by my count.

These make but seven.

DON RICARDO.

Oh, I did not name

Some bandits, probably engaged by Trèves
Or France.

DON CARLOS.

Men without prejudice of course,
Whose ready daggers turn to heaviest pay,
As truly as the needle to the pole.

DON RICARDO.

However, I observed two sturdy ones
Among them, both new comers — one was young,
The other old.

DON CARLOS.

Their names?

[DON RICARDO *shrugs his shoulders in sign of ignorance.*

Their age then say?

DON RICARDO.

The younger may be twenty.

DON CARLOS.

Pity then.

DON RICARDO.

The elder must be sixty, quite.

DON CARLOS.

One seems

Too young — the other, over old ; so much
For them the worse 'twill be. I will take care —
Myself will help the headsman, be there need.
My sword is sharpened for a traitor's block,
I'll lend it him if blunt his axe should grow,
And join my own imperial purple on
To piece the scaffold cloth, if it must be
Enlarged that way. But shall I Emperor prove?

DON RICARDO.

The College at this hour deliberates.

DON CARLOS.

Who knows? Francis the First, perchance, they'll name,
Or else their Saxon Frederick the Wise.
Ah, Luther, thou art right to blame the times
And scorn such makers-up of royalty,
That own no other rights than gilded ones.
A Saxon heretic! Primate of Trèves,
A libertine! Count Palatine, a fool!
As for Bohemia's king, for me he is.
Princes of Hesse, all smaller than their states!
The young are idiots, and the old debauched,
Of crowns a plenty — but for heads we search
In vain! Council of dwarfs ridiculous,
That I in lion's skin could carry off
Like Hercules; and who of violet robes
Bereft, would show but heads more shallow far
Than Triboulet's. See'st thou I want three votes
Or all is lost, Ricardo? Oh! I'd give
Toledo, Ghent, and Salamanca too,
Three towns, my friend, I'd offer to their choice
For their three voices — cities of Castile
And Flanders. Safe I know to take them back
A little later on.

(DON RICARDO bows low to the KING, and puts on his hat.)
You cover, Sir!

DON RICARDO.

Sire, you have called me thou (bowing again).
And thus I'm made
Grandee of Spain.

DON CARLOS (*aside*).

Ah, how to piteous scorn
You rouse me! Interested brood devour'd
By mean ambition. Thus across my plans
Yours struggle. Base the Court where without shame
The King is plied for honours, and he yields,
Bestowing grandeur on the hungry crew. (*Musing.*)
God only, and the Emperor are great,
Also the Holy Father! for the rest.
The kings and dukes, of what account are they?

DON RICARDO.

I trust that they your Highness will elect.

DON CARLOS.

Highness — still Highness! Oh, unlucky chance!
If only King I must remain.

DON RICARDO (*aside*).

By Jove,
Emperor or King, Grandee of Spain I am.

DON CARLOS.

When they've decided who shall be the one
They choose for Emperor of Germany,
What sign is to announce his name?

DON RICARDO.

The guns.
A single firing will proclaim the Duke
Of Saxony is chosen Emperor;
Two if 'tis Francis; for your Highness three.

DON CARLOS.

And Doña Sol! I'm crossed on every side.
If, Count, by turn of luck, I'm Emperor made,
Go seek her; she by Cæsar might be won.

DON RICARDO (*smiling*).

Your Highness pleases.

DON CARLOS (*haughtily*).

On that subject peace!

I have not yet inquired what's thought of me.
But tell me when will it be truly known
Who is elected?

DON RICARDO.

In an hour or so,

At latest.

DON CARLOS.

Ah, three votes; and only three!

But first this trait'rous rabble we must crush,
And then we'll see to whom the Empire falls,

[*He counts on his fingers and stamps his foot.*

Always by three too few! Ah, they hold power.

Yet did Cornelius know all long ago:

In Heaven's ocean thirteen stars he saw

Coming full sail towards mine, all from the north.

Empire for me — let's on! But it is said,

On other hand, that Jean Trithème Francis

Predicted! Clearer should I see my fate

Had I some armament the prophecy

To help. The Sorcerer's predictions come

Most true when a good army — with its guns

And lances, horse and foot, and martial strains,

Ready to lead the way where Fate alone

Might stumble — plays the midwife's part to bring.

Fulfilment of prediction. That's worth more

Than our Cornelius Agrippa or

Trithème. He, who by force of arms expounds

His system, and with sharpen'd point of lance
Can edge his words, and uses soldiers' swords
To level rugged fortune — shapes events
At his own will to match the prophecy.
Poor fools! who with proud eyes and haughty mien
Only look straight to Empire, and declare
"It is my right!" They need great guns in files
Whose burning breath melts towns; and soldiers, ships,
And horsemen. These they need their ends to gain
O'er trampled peoples. Pshaw! at the cross roads
Of human life, where one leads to a throne
Another to perdition, they will pause
In indecision,— scarce three steps will take
Uncertain of themselves, and in their doubt
Fly to the Necromancer for advice
Which road to take. (*To DON RICARDO.*)

Go now, 'tis near the time
The trait'rous crew will meet. Give me the key.

DON RICARDO (*giving key of tomb*).
Sire, 'twas the guardian of the tomb, the Count
De Limbourg, who to me confided it,
And has done everything to pleasure you.

DON CARLOS.
Do all, quite all that I commanded you.

DON RICARDO (*bowing*).
Highness, I go at once.

DON CARLOS.
The signal then
That I await is cannon firing thrice?

(DON RICARDO bows and exit.)
[DON CARLOS falls into a deep reverie, his arms crossed,
his head drooping; afterwards he raises it, and
turns to the tomb.]

SCENE 2.

DON CARLOS (*alone*).

Forgive me, Charlemagne! Oh, this lonely vault
Should echo only unto solemn words.
Thou must be angry at the babble vain
Of our ambition at your monument.
Here Charlemagne rests! How can the sombre tomb
Without a rifting spasm hold such dust!
And art thou truly here, colossal power,
Creator of the world? And canst thou now
Crouch down from all thy majesty and might?
Ah, 'tis a spectacle to stir the soul
What Europe was, and what by thee 'twas made.
Mighty construction with two men supreme
Elected chiefs to whom born kings submit.
States, duchies, kingdoms, marquises and fiefs —
By right hereditary most are ruled,
But nations find a friend sometimes in Pope
Or Cæsar; and one chance another chance
Corrects; thus even balance is maintained
And order opens out. The cloth-of-gold
Electors, and the scarlet cardinals.
The double, sacred senate, unto which
Earth bends, are but paraded outward show,
God's fiat rules it all. One day HE wills
A thought, a want, should burst upon the world,
Then grow and spread, and mix with every thing,
Possess some man, win hearts, and delve a groove
Though kings may trample on it, and may seek
To gag; — only that they some morn may see
At diet, conclave, this the scorned idea,
That they had spurned, all suddenly expand
And soar above their heads, bearing the globe

In hand, or on the brow tiara. Pope
And Emperor, they on earth are all in all,
A mystery supreme dwells in them both,
And Heaven's might, which they still represent,
Feasts them with kings and nations, holding them
Beneath its thunder-cloud, the while they sit
At table with the world served out for food.
Alone they regulate all things on earth,
Just as the mower manages his field.
All rule and power are theirs. Kings at the door
Inhale the odour of their savoury meats,
Look through the window, watchful on tip-toe,
But weary of the scene. The common world
Below them groups itself on ladder-rungs.
They make and all unmake. One can release,
The other surely strike. The one is Truth,
The other Might. Each to himself is law,
And is, because he is. When — equals they
The one in purple, and the other swathed
In white like winding-sheet — when they come out
From Sanctuary, the dazzled multitude
Look with wild terror on these halves of God,
The Pope and Emperor. Emperor! oh, to be
Thus great! Oh, anguish, not to be this Power
When beats the heart with dauntless courage fill'd!
Oh, happy he who sleeps within this tomb!
How great, and oh! how fitted for his time!
The Pope and Emperor were more than men,
In them two Romes in mystic Hymen joined
Prolific were, giving new form and soul
Unto the human race, refounding realms
And nations, shaping thus a Europe new,
And both remoulding with their hands the bronze
Remaining of the great old Roman world.
What destiny! And yet 'tis here he lies?
Is all so little that we come to this!
What then? To have been Prince and Emperor,

And King — to have been sword, and also law;
Giant, with Germany for pedestal —
For title *Cæsar* — Charlemagne for name:
A greater to have been than Hannibal
Or *Attila* — as great as was the world.
Yet all rests here! For Empire strive and strain
And see the dust that makes an Emperor!
Cover the earth with tumult, and with noise
Know you that one day only will remain —
Oh, madd'ning thought — a stone! For sounding name
Triumphant, but some letters 'graved to serve
For little children to learn spelling by.
How high so e'er ambition made thee soar,
Behold the end of all! Oh, Empire, power,
What matters all to me! I near it now
And like it well. Some voice declares to me
Thine — thine — it will be thine. Heavens, were it so!
To mount at once the spiral height supreme
And be alone — the key-stone of the arch,
With states beneath, one o'er the other ranged,
And kings for mats to wipe one's sandall'd feet!
To see 'neath kings the feudal families,
Margraves and Cardinals, and Doges — Dukes,
Then Bishops, Abbés — Chiefs of ancient clans,
Great Barons — then the soldier class and clerks,
And know yet farther off — in the deep shade
At bottom of th' abyss there is Mankind —
That is to say a crowd, a sea of men,
A tumult — cries, with tears, and bitter laugh
Sometimes. The wail wakes up and scares the earth
And reaches us with leaping echoes, and
With trumpet tone. Oh, citizens, oh, men!
The swarm that from the high church towers seems now
To sound the tocsin! (*Musing.*)

Wondrous human base
Of nations, bearing on your shoulders broad
The mighty pyramid that has two poles,

The living waves that ever straining hard
Balance and shake it as they heave and roll,
Make all change place, and on the highest heights
Make stagger thrones, as if they were but stools.
So sure is this, that ceasing vain debates
Kings look to Heaven! Kings look down below,
Look at the people! — Restless ocean, there
Where nothing's cast that does not shake the whole;
The sea that rends a throne, and rocks a tomb —
A glass in which kings rarely look but ill.
Ah, if upon this gloomy sea they gazed
Sometimes, what Empires in its depths they'd find!
Great vessels wrecked that by its ebb and flow
Are stirr'd — that wearied it — known now no more!
To govern this — to mount so high if called,
Yet know myself to be but mortal man!
To see the abyss — if not that moment struck
With dizziness bewildering every sense.
Oh, moving pyramid of states and kings
With apex narrow,— woe to timid step!
What shall restrain me? If I fail when there
Feeling my feet upon the trembling world,
Feeling alive the palpitating earth,
Then when I have between my hands the globe
Have I the strength alone to hold it fast,
To be an Emperor? Oh, God, 'twas hard
And difficult to play the kingly part.
Certes, no man is rarer than the one
Who can enlarge his soul to duly meet
Great Fortune's smiles, and still increasing gifts.
But I! Who is it that shall be my guide,
My counsellor, and make me great?

[*Falls on his knees before the tomb.*

'Tis thou,

Oh, Charlemagne! And since 'tis God for whom
All obstacles dissolve, who takes us now
And puts us face to face — from this tomb's depths

Endow me with sublimity and strength.
Let me be great enough to see the truth
On every side. Show me how small the world
I dare not measure — me this Babel show
Where, from the hind to Cæsar mounting up,
Each one, complaisant with himself, regards
The next with scorn that is but half restrained.
Teach me the secret of thy conquests all,
And how to rule. And show me certainly
Whether to punish, or to pardon, be
The worthier thing to do.

Is it not fact

That in his solitary bed sometimes
A mighty shade is wakened from his sleep,
Aroused by noise and turbulence on earth;
That suddenly his tomb expands itself,
And bursts its doors — and in the night flings forth
A flood of light? If this be true indeed,
Say, Emperor! what can after Charlemagne
Another do! Speak, though thy sovereign breath
Should cleave this brazen door. Or rather now
Let me thy sanctuary enter lone!
Let me behold thy veritable face,
And not repulse me with a freezing breath,
Upon thy stony pillow elbows lean,
And let us talk. Yes, with prophetic voice
Tell me of things which make the forehead pale,
And clear eyes mournful. Speak, and do not blind
Thine awe-struck son, for doubtlessly thy tomb
Is full of light. Or if thou wilt not speak,
Let me make study in the solemn peace
Of thee, as of a world, thy measure take,
Oh giant, for there's nothing here below
So great as thy poor ashes. Let them teach,
Failing thy spirit. *[He puts the key in the lock.*
Let us enter now. *[He recoils.*
Oh, God, if he should really whisper me!

If he be there and walks with noiseless tread,
And I come back with hair in moments bleached!
I'll do it still. *[Sound of footsteps.]*

Who comes? who dares disturb
Besides myself the dwelling of such dead!
[The sound comes nearer.]

My murderers! I forgot! Now enter we.
[He opens the door of the tomb, which shuts upon him.]
*(Enter several men walking softly disguised by large
cloaks and hats.)*

SCENE 3.—THE CONSPIRATORS.

*(They take each others' hands, going from one to another
and speaking in a low tone.)*

FIRST CONSPIRATOR *(who alone carries a lighted torch).*
Ad angusta.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.
Per angusta.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.
The Saints
Shield us.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.
The dead assist us.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.
Guard us God!
[Noise in the shade.]

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.
Who's there?

A VOICE.
Ad angusta.

SECOND CONSPIRATOR.
Per angusta.

[*Enter fresh CONSPIRATORS — noise of footsteps.*

FIRST CONSPIRATOR to THIRD.

See! there is some one still to come.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Who's there?

(*Voice in the darkness.*)

Ad augusta.

THIRD CONSPIRATOR.

Per augusta.

(*Enter more CONSPIRATORS, who exchange signs with their hands with the others.*)

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

'Tis well.

All now are here. Gotha, to you it falls
To state the case. Friends, darkness waits for light.

[*THE CONSPIRATORS sit in a half circle on the tombs. The FIRST CONSPIRATOR passes before them, and from his torch each one lights a wax taper which he holds in his hand. Then the FIRST CONSPIRATOR seats himself in silence on a tomb a little higher than the others in the centre of the circle.*

DUKE OF GOTHA (*rising*).

My friends! This Charles of Spain, by mother's side
A foreigner, aspires to mount the throne
Of Holy Empire.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

But for him the grave.

DUKE OF GOTHA (*throwing down his light and crushing it with his foot*).

Let it be with his head as with this flame.

ALL.

So be it.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Death unto him,

DUKE OF GOTHÄ.

Let him die.

ALL.

Let him be slain.

DON JUAN DE HARO.

German his father was.

DUKE DE LUTZELBOURG.

His mother Spanish.

DUKE OF GOTHÄ.

Thus you see that he

Is no more one than other. Let him die.

A CONSPIRATOR.

Suppose th' Electors at this very hour
Declare him Emperor!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Him! oh, never him!

DON GIL TELLEZ GIRON.

What signifies? Let us strike off the head,
The Crown will fall.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

But if to him belongs

The Holy Empire, he becomes so great
And so august, that only God's own hand
Can reach him.

DUKE OF GOTHÄ.

All the better reason why

He dies before such power august he gains.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

He shall not be elected.

ALL.

Not for him

The Empire.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Now, how many hands will't take
To put him in his shroud?

ALL.

One is enough.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

How many strokes to reach his heart?

ALL.

But one.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

Who, then, will strike?

ALL.

All! All!

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

The victim is

A traitor proved. They would an Emperor choose,
We've a high-priest to make. Let us draw lots.

*[All the CONSPIRATORS write their names on their tablets,
tear out the leaf, roll it up, and one after another
throw them into the urn on one of the tombs.
Afterwards the FIRST CONSPIRATOR says,*

Now let us pray.

(All kneel, the FIRST CONSPIRATOR rises and says,)

Oh, may the chosen one

Believe in God, and like a Roman strike,
Die as a Hebrew would, and brave alike
The wheel and burning pincers, laugh at rack,
And fire, and wooden horse, and be resigned
To kill and die. He might have all to do.

[He draws a parchment from the urn.

ALL.

What name?

FIRST CONSPIRATOR *(in low voice)*.

Hernani!

HERNANI (*coming out from the crowd of CONSPIRATORS*).

I have won, yes won!

I hold thee fast! Thee I've so long pursued
With vengeance.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*piercing through the crowd and taking
HERNANI aside*).

Yield — oh yield this right to me.

HERNANI.

Not for my life! Oh, Signor, grudge me not
This stroke of fortune — 'tis the first I've known.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

You nothing have! I'll give you houses, lands,
A hundred thousand vassals shall be yours
In my three hundred villages, if you
But yield the right to strike to me.

HERNANI.

No — no.

DUKE OF GOTH.

Old man, thy arm would strike less sure a blow.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Back! I have strength of soul, if not of arm.
Judge not the sword by the mere scabbard's rust.

(*To* HERNANI.)

You do belong to me.

HERNANI.

My life is yours,

As his belongs to me.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*drawing the horn from his girdle*).

I yield her up,

And will return the horn.

HERNANI (*he trembles*).

What life! my life

And Doña Sol! No, I my vengeance choose.

I have my father to revenge — yet more,
Perchance I am inspired by God in this.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

I yield thee Her — and give thee back the horn!

HERNANI.

No!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Boy, reflect.

HERNANI.

Oh, Duke, leave me my prey.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

My curses on you for depriving me
Of this my joy.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR. (*To HERNANI.*)

Oh, brother, ere they can

Elect him — 'twould be well this very night
To watch for Charles.

HERNANI.

Fear nought, I know the way

To kill a man.

FIRST CONSPIRATOR.

May every treason fall

On traitor, and may God be with you now.

We Counts and Barons, let us take the oath

That if he fall, yet slay not, we go on

And strike by turn unflinching till Charles dies.

ALL (*drawing their swords*).

Let us all swear.

DUKE OF GOTH (to FIRST CONSPIRATOR).

My brother, let's decide

On what we swear.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*taking his sword by the point and raising
it above his head.*)

By this same cross,

ALL (*raising their swords*).

And this

That he must quickly die impenitent.

[*They hear a cannon fired afar off. All pause and are silent. The door of the tomb half opens, and DON CARLOS appears at the threshold. A second gun is fired, then a third. He opens wide the door and stands erect and motionless without advancing.*]

SCENE 4.—*The CONSPIRATORS and DON CARLOS. Afterwards DON RICARDO; SIGNORS, GUARDS, The KING OF BOHEMIA, The DUKE OF BAVARIA, afterwards DONA SOL.*

DON CARLOS.

Fall back, ye gentlemen — the Emperor hears.

[*All the lights are simultaneously extinguished. A profound silence. DON CARLOS advances a step in the darkness, so dense, that the silent, motionless CONSPIRATORS can scarcely be distinguished.*]

Silence and night! From darkness sprung, the swarm
 Into the darkness plunges back again!
 Think ye this scene is like a passing dream,
 And that I take you now your lights are quenched,
 For men's stone figures seated on their tombs?
 Just now, my statues, you had voices loud,
 Raise, then, your drooping heads for Charles the Fifth
 Is here. Strike. Move a pace or two and show
 You dare. But no, 'tis not in you to dare.
 Your flaming torches, blood-red 'neath these vaults,
 My breath extinguished; but now turn your eyes
 Irresolute, and see that if I thus
 Put out the many, I can light still more.

[*He strikes the iron key on the bronze door of the tomb. At the sound all the depths of the cavern are filled with soldiers bearing torches and halberts. At their head the DUKE D'ALCALA, the MARQUIS D'ALMUÑAN, &c.*]

Come on, my falcons! I've the nest — the prey.

(*To CONSPIRATORS.*)

I can make blaze of light, 'tis my turn now,

Behold! (*To the Soldiers.*)

Advance — for flagrant is the crime.

HERNANI (*looking at the Soldiers*).

Ah, well! At first I thought 'twas Charlemagne,

Alone he seemed so great — but after all

'Tis only Charles the Fifth.

DON CARLOS (*to the DUKE D'ALCALA*).

Come, Constable

Of Spain, (*To MARQUIS D'ALMUÑAN.*)

And you Castilian Admiral,

Disarm them all.

[*The CONSPIRATORS are surrounded and disarmed.*]

DON RICARDO (*hurrying in and bowing almost to the ground*).

Your Majesty!

DON CARLOS.

Alcadé

I make you of the Palace.

DON RICARDO (*again bowing*).

Two Electors,

To represent the Golden Chamber, come

To offer to your Sacred Majesty

Congratulations now.

DON CARLOS.

Let them come forth.

(*Aside to DON RICARDO*).

The Doña Sol.

[RICARDO bows and exit. Enter with flambeaux and flourish of trumpets the KING OF BOHEMIA and the DUKE OF BAVARIA, both wearing cloth of gold,

and with crowns on their heads. Numerous followers. German nobles carrying the banner of the Empire, the double-headed Eagle, with the escutcheon of Spain in the middle of it. The Soldiers divide, forming lines between which the ELECTORS pass to the EMPEROR, to whom they bow low. He returns the salutation by raising his hat.

DUKE OF BAVARIA.

Most Sacred Majesty

Charles, of the Romans King, and Emperor,
The Empire of the world is in your hands —
Yours is the throne to which each king aspires!
The Saxon Frederick was elected first,
But he judged you more worthy, and declined.
Now then receive the crown and globe, oh King —
The Holy Empire doth invest you now,
Arms with the sword, and you indeed are great.

DON CARLOS.

The College I will thank on my return.
But go, my brother of Bohemia,
And you, Bavarian cousin. — Thanks; but now
I do dismiss you — I shall go myself.

KING OF BOHEMIA.

Oh! Charles, our ancestors were friends. My Sire
Loved yours, and their two fathers were two friends —
So young! exposed to varied fortunes! say,
Oh Charles, may I be ranked a very chief
Among thy brothers? I cannot forget
I knew you as a little child.

DON CARLOS.

Ah, well —

King of Bohemia, you presume too much.

[*He gives him his hand to kiss, also the DUKE OF BAVARIA, both bow low.*

Depart. [*Exeunt the two ELECTORS with their followers.*

THE CROWD.

LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR!

DON CARLOS (*aside*).

So 'tis mine,

All things have helped, and I am Emperor —

By the refusal though of Frederick

Surnamed the Wise!

(*Enter DOÑA SOL led by DON RICARDO.*)

DOÑA SOL.

What, Soldiers! — Emperor!

Hernani! Heaven, what an unlooked-for chance!

HERNANI.

Ah! Doña Sol!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*aside to HERNANI*).

She has not seen me.

[*DOÑA SOL runs to HERNANI, who makes her recoil by a look of disdain.*]

HERNANI.

Madam!

DOÑA SOL (*drawing the dagger from her bosom*).

I still his poignard have!

HERNANI (*taking her in his arms*).

My dearest one!

DON CARLOS.

Be silent all. (*To the CONSPIRATORS.*)

Is't you remorseless are?

I need to give the world a lesson now,

The Lara of Castile, and Gotha, you

Of Saxony — all — all — what were your plans

Just now? I bid you speak.

HERNANI.

Quite simple, Sire,

The thing, and we can briefly tell it you.

We 'graved the sentence on Belshazzar's wall.

[He takes out a poignard and brandishes it.]

We render unto Cæsar Cæsar's due.

DON CARLOS.

Silence!

(To DON RUY GOMEZ.)

And you! You too are traitor, Silva!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Which of us two is traitor, Sire?

HERNANI *(turning towards the CONSPIRATORS)*.

Our heads

And Empire — all that he desires he has.

(To the EMPEROR.)

The mantle blue of kings encumbered you;

The purple better suits — it shows not blood.

DON CARLOS *(to DON RUY GOMEZ)*.

Cousin of Silva, this is felony,

Attaining your baronial rank. Think well,

Don Ruy — high treason!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Kings like Roderick

Count Julians make.¹

DON CARLOS *(to the DUKE D'ALCALA)*.

Seize only those who seem

The nobles, — for the rest! —

[DON RUY GOMEZ, *the* DUKE DE LUTZELBOURG, *the*

DUKE OF GOTH, DON JUAN DE HARO, DON GUZ-

¹ Roderick, the last Gothic King, by craft and violence dishonoured Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, who, in revenge, invited the Saracens into Spain, and assisted their invasion, A.D. 713. Their army was commanded by Tarik, who gave the name Gibel-al-Tarik, or mountain of Tarik, to the place where he landed — a name corrupted to Gibraltar. So incensed were the Spaniards against the hapless Florinda, that they abolished the word as a woman's name, reserving it henceforth for dogs. — TRANS.

MAN DE LARA, DON TELLEZ GIRON, the BARON OF HOHENBOURG *separate themselves from the group of CONSPIRATORS, among whom is HERNANI. The DUKE D'ALCALA surrounds them with guards.*

DOÑA SOL (*aside*).

Ah, he is saved!

HERNANI (*coming from among the CONSPIRATORS*).
I claim to be included! (*To DON CARLOS.*)

Since to this

It comes, the question of the axe — that now
Hernani, humble churl, beneath thy feet
Unpunished goes, because his brow is not
At level with thy sword — because one must
Be great to die, I rise. God, who gives power,
And gives to thee the scepter, made me Duke
Of Segorbe and Cardona, Marquis too
Of Monroy, Albaterra's Count, of Gor
Viscount, and Lord of many places, more
Than I can name. Juan of Aragon
Am I, Grand Master of Avis — the son
In exile born, of murder'd father slain
By king's decree, King Charles, which me proscribed,
Thus death 'twixt us is family affair;
You have the scaffold — we the poignard hold.
Since heaven a Duke has made me, and exile
A mountaineer, — since all in vain I've sharpen'd
Upon the hills my sword, and in the torrents
Have tempered it, [*He puts on his hat.*

(*To the CONSPIRATORS.*)

Let us be covered now,
Us the Grandees of Spain. (*They cover.*)

(*To DON CARLOS.*)

Our heads, oh! King,
Have right to fall before thee covered thus.

(*To the PRISONERS.*)

Silva, and Haro — Lara — men of rank

And race make room for Juan of Aragon.
Give me my place, ye Dukes and Counts — my place.
(*To the COURTIERs and GUARDs.*)

King, headsmen, varlets — Juan of Aragon
Am I. If all your scaffolds are too small
Make new ones. (*He joins the group of NOBLES.*)

DoÑA SOL.
Heavens!

DON CARLOS.

I had forgotten quite
This history.

HERNANI.

But they who bleed remember
Far better. Th' evil that wrong-doer thus
So senselessly forgets, for ever stirs
Within the outraged heart.

DON CARLOS.

Therefore, enough
For me to bear this title, that I'm son
Of sires, whose power dealt death to ancestors
Of yours!

DoÑA SOL (*falling on her knees before the EMPEROR.*)

Oh, pardon — pardon! Mercy, Sire,
Be pitiful, or strike us both, I pray,
For he my lover is, my promised spouse,
In him it is alone I live — I breathe;
Oh, Sire, in mercy us together slay.
Trembling — oh Majesty! — I trail myself
Before your sacred knees. I love him, Sire,
And he is mine — as Empire is your own.
Have pity! (DON CARLOS *looks at her without moving.*)
Oh what thought absorbs you?

DON CARLOS.

Cease.

Rise — Duchess of Segorbé — Marchioness
Of Monroy — Countess Albaterra — and (To HERNANI.)
Thine other names, Don Juan?

HERNANI.

Who speaks thus,

The King?

DON CARLOS.

No, 'tis the Emperor.

DOÑA SOL.

Just Heav'n!

DON CARLOS (*pointing to her*).

Duke Juan, take your wife.

HERNANI (*his eyes raised to heaven, DOÑA SOL in his arms*).
Just God!

DON CARLOS (*to DON RUY GOMEZ*).

My cousin,

I know the pride of your nobility,
But Aragon with Silva well may mate.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*bitterly*).

'Tis not a question of nobility.

HERNANI (*looking with love on DOÑA SOL and still holding
her in his arms*).

My deadly hate is vanishing away.

[*Throws away his dagger.*]

DON RUY GOMEZ (*aside, and looking at them*).

Shall I betray myself? Oh, no — my grief,
My foolish love would make them pity cast
Upon my venerable head. Old man
And Spaniard! Let the hidden fire consume,
And suffer still in secret. Let heart break
But cry not; — they would laugh at thee.

DOÑA SOL (*still in HERNANI's arms*).

My Duke!

HERNANI.

Nothing my soul holds now but love!

DoÑA SOL.

Oh, joy!

DON CARLOS (*aside, his hand in his bosom*).

Stifle thyself, young heart so full of flame,

Let reign again the better thoughts which thou

So long hast troubled. Henceforth let thy loves,

Thy mistresses, alas!—be Germany

And Flanders—Spain (*looking at the banner*).

The Emperor is like

The Eagle his companion, in the place

Of heart, there's but a 'scutcheon.

HERNANI.

Cæsar you!

DON CARLOS.

Don Juan, of your ancient name and race

Your soul is worthy (*pointing to DoÑA SOL*).

Worthy e'en of her.

Kneel, Duke.

[HERNANI *kneels*. DON CARLOS *unfastens his own Golden Fleece and puts it on HERNANI'S neck*.

Receive this collar.

[DON CARLOS *draws his sword and strikes him three times on the shoulder*.

Faithful be,

For by St. Stephen now I make thee Knight.

[*He raises and embraces him*.

Thou hast a collar softer and more choice;

That which is wanting to my rank supreme,—

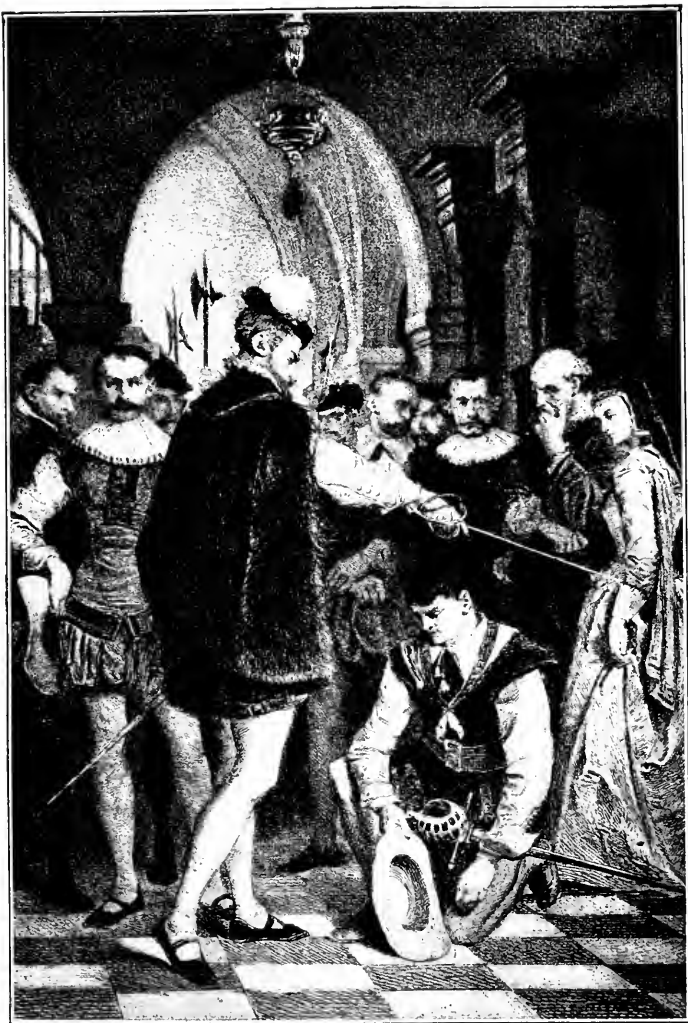
The arms of loving woman, loved by thee.

Thou wilt be happy—I am Emperor. (*To CONSPIRATORS*.)

Sirs, I forget your names. Anger and hate

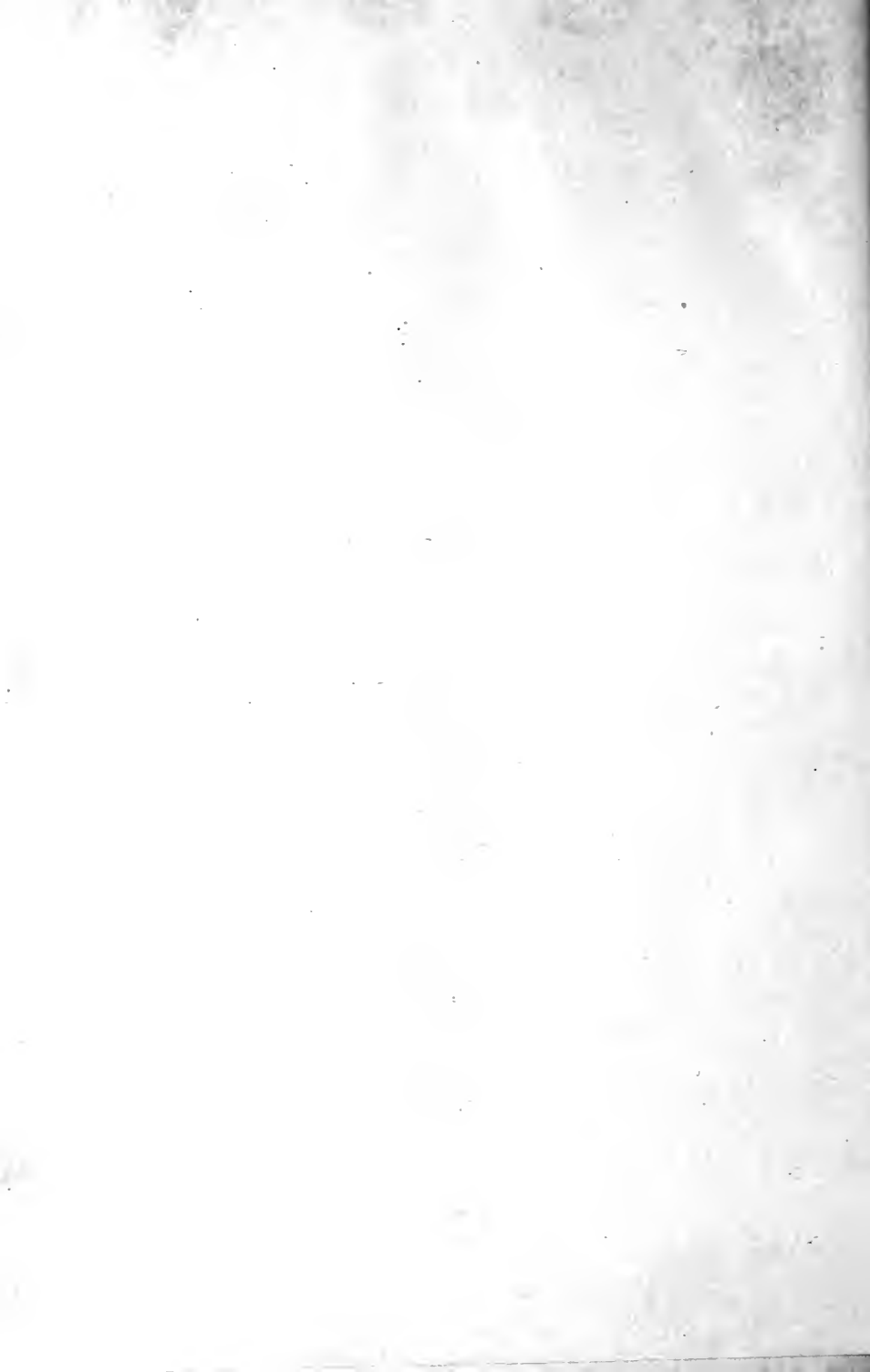
I will forget. Go—go—I pardon you.

This is the lesson that the world much needs.



Don Carlos "Faithful be
For by St. Stephen now I make thee Knight."

Dramas. Hernani: Act IV, Page 120.



THE CONSPIRATORS.

Glory to Charles!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*to DON CARLOS*).

I only suffer then!

DON CARLOS.

And I!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

But I have not like Majesty

Forgiven!

HERNANI.

Who is't has worked this wondrous change?

ALL. NOBLES, SOLDIERS, CONSPIRATORS.

Honour to Charles the Fifth, and Germany!

DON CARLOS (*turning to the tomb*).

Honour to Charlemagne! Leave us now together.

[*Exeunt all.*]

SCENE 5.—DON CARLOS (*alone*).

[*He bends towards the tomb.*]

Art thou content with me, oh, Charlemagne!

Have I the kingship's littleness stripped off?

Become as Emperor another man?

Can I Rome's mitre add unto my helm?

Have I the right the fortunes of the world

To sway? Have I a steady foot that safe

Can tread the path, by Vandal ruins strewed,

Which thou hast beaten by thine armies vast?

Have I my candle lighted at thy flame?

Did I interpret right the voice that spake

Within this tomb? Ah, I was lost — alone

Before an Empire — a wide howling world

That threatened and conspired! There were the Danes

To punish, and the Holy Father's self

To compensate — with Venice — Soliman,

Francis, and Luther — and a thousand dirks

Gleaming already in the shade — snares — rocks;
And countless foes; a score of nations, each
Of which might serve to awe a score of kings.
Things ripe, all pressing to be done at once.
I cried to thee — with what shall I begin?
And thou didst answer — Son, by clemency!

FIFTH ACT.

THE NUPTIALS.

SCENE 1.—SARAGOSSA. *A terrace of the palace of Aragon. At the back a flight of steps leading to the garden. At the right and left, doors on to a terrace which shows at the back of the stage a balustrade surmounted by a double row of Moorish arches, above and through which are seen the palace gardens, fountains in the shade, shrubberies and moving lights, and the Gothic and Arabic arches of the palace illuminated. It is night. Trumpets afar off are heard. Masks and Dominoes, either singly or in groups, cross the terrace here and there. At the front of the stage a group of young lords, their masks in their hands, laugh and chat noisily.*

DON SANCHEZ DE ZUNIGA, COMTE DE MONTERET,
DON MATIAS CENTURION, MARQUIS D'ALMUÑAN, DON
RICARDO DE ROXAS, COMTE DE CASAPALMA, DON FRAN-
CISCO DE SOTOMAYOR, COMTE DE VALALCAZAR, DON
GARCIE SUAREZ DE CARBAJAL, COMTE DE PENALVER.

DON GARCIE.

Now to the bride long life — and joy — I say!

DON MATIAS (*looking to the balcony*).

All Saragossa at its windows shows.

DON GARCIE.

And they do well. A torch-light wedding ne'er
Was seen more gay than this, nor lovelier night,
Nor handsomer married pair.

DON MATIAS.

Kind Emp'ror!

DON SANCHE.

When we went with him in the dark that night
Seeking adventure, Marquis, who'd have thought
How it would end?

DON RICARDO (*interrupting*).

I, too, was there. (*To the others.*) Now list.
Three gallants, one a bandit, his head due
Unto the scaffold; then a Duke, a King,
Adoring the same woman, all laid siege
At the same time. The onset made — who won?
It was the bandit.

DON FRANCISCO.

Nothing strange in that,
For love and fortune, in all other lands
As well as Spain, are sport of the cogg'd dice.
It is the rogue who wins.

DON RICARDO.

My fortune grew
In seeing the love-making. First a Count
And then Grandee, and next an Alcadé
At court. My time was well spent, though without
One knowing it.

DON SANCHE.

Your secret, sir, appears
To be the keeping close upon the heels
O' the King.

DON RICARDO.

And showing that my conduct's worth
Reward.

DON GARCIE.

And by chance you profited.

DON MATIAS.

What has become of the old Duke? has he
His coffin ordered?

DON SANCHE.

Marquis, jest not thus

At him! For he a haughty spirit has;
And this old man loved well the Doña Sol.
His sixty years had turned his hair to grey,
One day has bleached it.

DON GARCIE.

Not again, they say,

Has he been seen in Saragossa.

DON SANCHE.

Well?

Wouldst thou that to the bridal he should bring
His coffin?

DON FRANCISCO.

What's the Emperor doing now?

DON SANCHE.

The Emperor is out of sorts just now,
Luther annoys him.

DON RICARDO.

Luther! — subject fine

For care and fear! Soon would I finish him
With but four men-at-arms!

DON MATIAS.

And Soliman

Makes him dejected.

DON GARCIE.

Luther — Soliman

Neptune — the devil — Jupiter! What are
They all to me? The women are most fair,
The masquerade is splendid, and I've said
A hundred foolish things!

DON SANCHE.

Behold you now

The chief thing.

DON RICARDO.

Garcie's not far wrong, I say.
Not the same man am I on festal days.
When I put on the mask in truth I think
Another head it gives me.

DON SANCHE (*apart to DON MATIAS*).
Pity 'tis

That all days are not festivals!

DON FRANCISCO.

Are those

Their rooms?

DON GARCIE (*with a nod of his head*).
Arrive they will, no doubt, full soon.

DON FRANCISCO.

Dost think so?

DON GARCIE.
Most undoubtedly!

DON FRANCISCO.

'Tis well.

The bride is lovely!

DON RICARDO.

What an Emperor!

The rebel chief, Hernani, to be pardoned —
Wearing the Golden Fleece! and married too!
Ah, if the Emperor had been by me
Advised, the gallant should have had a bed
Of stone, the lady one of down.

DON SANCHE (*aside to DON MATIAS*).
How well

I'd like with my good sword this lord to smash,
A lord made up of tinsel coarsely joined;
Pourpoint of Count filled out with bailiff's soul!

DON RICARDO (*drawing near*).

What are you saying?

DON MATIAS (*aside to DON SANCHE*).

Count, no quarrel here!

(*To DON RICARDO.*)

He was reciting one of Petrarch's sonnets
Unto his lady love.

DON GARCIE.

Have you not seen

Among the flowers and women, and dresses gay,
Of many hues, a figure spectre-like,
Whose domino all black, upright against
A balustrade, seems like a spot upon
The festival?

DON RICARDO.

Yes, by my faith!

DON GARCIE.

Who is't?

DON RICARDO.

By height and mien I judge that it must be ——
The admiral — the Don Prancasio.

DON FRANCISCO.

Oh, no.

DON GARCIE.

He has not taken off his mask.

DON FRANCISCO.

There is no need; it is the Duke de Soma,
Who likes to be observed. 'Tis nothing more.

DON RICARDO.

No; the Duke spoke to me.

DON GARCIE.

Who then can be

This Mask? But see — he's here.

[Enter a Black Domino, who slowly crosses the back of the stage. All turn and watch him without his appearing to notice them.]

DON SANCHO.

If the dead walk,

That is their step.

DON GARCIE (*approaching the Black Domino*).

Most noble Mask ——

(*The Black Domino stops and turns. GARCIE recoils.*)

I swear,

Good Sirs, that I saw flame shine in his eyes.

DON SANCHO.

If he's the devil he'll find one he can

Address.

[*He goes to the Black Domino, who is still motionless.*

Ho, Demon! comest thou from hell?

THE MASK.

I come not thence — 'tis thither that I go.

[*He continues his walk and disappears at the balustrade of the staircase. All watch him with a look of horrified dismay.*

DON MATIAS.

Sepulchral is his voice, as can be heard.

DON GARCIE.

Pshaw! What would frighten elsewhere, at a ball
We laugh at.

DON SANCHO.

Silly jesting 'tis!

DON GARCIE.

Indeed,

If Lucifer is come to see us dance,
Waiting for lower regions, let us dance!

DON SANCHO.

Of course it's some buffoonery.

DON MATIAS.

We'll know

To-morrow.

DON SANCHE (to DON MATIAS).

Look now what becomes of him,

I pray you!

DON MATIAS (*at the balustrade of the terrace*).

Down the steps he's gone. That's all.

DON SANCHE.

A pleasant jester he! (*Musing.*) 'Tis strange.DON GARCIE (*to a lady passing*).

Marquise,

Let us pray dance this time. [*He bows and offers his hand.*]

THE LADY.

You know, dear sir,

My husband will my dances with you all

Count up.

DON GARCIE.

All the more reason. Pleased is he

To count, it seems, and it amuses him.

He calculates — we dance.

[*The lady gives her hand and they exeunt.*]DON SANCHE (*thoughtfully*).

In truth, 'tis strange!

DON MATIAS.

Behold the married pair! Now silence all!

[*Enter HERNANI and DOÑA SOL hand in hand. DOÑA SOL in magnificent bridal dress. HERNANI in black velvet and with the Golden Fleece hanging from his neck. Behind them a crowd of Masks and of ladies and gentlemen who form their retinue. Two Halberdiers in rich liveries follow them, and four pages precede them. Everyone makes way*]

for them and bows as they approach. Flourish of trumpets.

SCENE 2.—*The Same.* HERNANI, DOÑA SOL *and retinue.*
' HERNANI (*saluting*).

Dear friends!

DON RICARDO (*advancing and bowing*).

Your Excellency's happiness

Makes ours.

DON FRANCISCO (*looking at Doña Sol*).

Now, by St. James, 'tis Venus' self

That he is leading.

DON MATIAS.

Happiness is his!

DON SANCHO (*to DON MATIAS*).

'Tis late now, let us leave.

[*All salute the married pair and retire — some by the door, others by the stairway at the back.*]

HERNANI (*escorting them*).

Adieu!

DON SANCHO (*who has remained to the last, and pressing his hand*).

Be happy!

[*Exit DON SANCHO.*]

[*HERNANI and Doña Sol remain alone. The sound of voices grows fainter and fainter till it ceases altogether. During the early part of the following scene the sound of trumpets grows fainter, and the lights by degrees are extinguished — till night and silence prevail.*]

SCENE 3.—HERNANI. DOÑA SOL.

DOÑA SOL.

At last they are all gone.

HERNANI (*seeking to draw her to his arms*).

Dear love!

DOÑA SOL (*drawing back a little*).

Is't late? —

At least to me it seems so.

HERNANI.

Angel dear,

Time ever drags till we together are.

DOÑA SOL.

This noise has wearied me. Is it not true,
Dear Lord, that all this mirth but stifling is
To happiness?

HERNANI.

Thou sayest truly, Love,

For happiness is serious, and asks
For hearts of bronze on which to 'grave itself.
Pleasure alarms it, flinging to it flowers;
Its smile is nearer tears than mirth.

DOÑA SOL.

Thy smile's

Like daylight in thine eyes.

[HERNANI *seeks to lead her to the door*.

Oh, presently.

HERNANI.

I am thy slave; yes, linger if thou wilt,
Whate'er thou dost is well. I'll laugh and sing
If thou desirest that it should be so.
Bid the volcano stifle flame, and 'twill

Close up its gulfs, and on its sides grow flowers,
And grasses green.

DoÑA SOL.

How good you are to me,
My heart's Hernani!

HERNANI.

Madam, what name's that?

I pray in pity speak it not again!
Thou call'st to mind forgotten things. I know
That he existed formerly in dreams,
Hernani, he whose eyes flashed like a sword,
A man of night and of the hills, a man
Proscribed, on whom was seen writ everywhere
The one word *vengeance*. An unhappy man
That drew down malediction! I know not
The man they called Hernani. As for me,
I love the birds and flowers, and woods — and song
Of nightingale. I'm Juan of Aragon,
The spouse of Doña Sol — a happy man!

DoÑA SOL.

Happy am I!

HERNANI.

What does it matter now,
The rags I left behind me at the door!
Behold, I to my palace desolate
Come back. Upon the threshold-sill there waits
For me an Angel; I come in and lift
Upright the broken columns, kindle fire,
And open again the windows; and the grass
Upon the courtyard I have all pluck'd up;
For me there is but joy, enchantment, love.
Let them give back my towers, and donjon-keep,
My plume, and seat at the Castilian board
Of Council, comes my blushing Doña Sol,
Let them leave us — the rest forgotten is.

Nothing I've seen, nor said, nor have I done.
Anew my life begins, the past effacing.
Wisdom or madness, you I have and love,
And you are all my joy!

DOÑA SOL.

How well upon
The velvet black the golden collar shows!

HERNANI.

You saw it on the King ere now on me.

DOÑA SOL.

I did not notice. Others, what are they
To me? Besides, the velvet is it, or
The satin? No, my Duke, it is thy neck
Which suits the golden collar. Thou art proud
And noble, my own Lord. [*He seeks to lead her indoors.*
Oh, presently,

A moment! See you not, I weep with joy?
Come look upon the lovely night.

[*She goes to the balustrade.*

My Duke,

Only a moment — but the time to breathe
And gaze. All now is o'er, the torches out,
The music done. Night only is with us.
Felicity most perfect! Think you not
That now while all is still and slumbering,
Nature, half waking, watches us with love?
No cloud is in the sky. All things like us
Are now at rest. Come, breathe with me the air
Perfumed by roses. Look, there is no light,
Nor hear we any noise. Silence prevails.
The moon just now from the horizon rose
E'en while you spoke to me; her trembling light
And thy dear voice together reached my heart.
Joyous and softly calm I felt, oh, thou

My lover! And it seemed that I would then
Most willingly have died.

HERNANI.

Ah, who is there
Would not all things forget when listening thus
Unto this voice celestial! Thy speech
But seems a chaunt with nothing human mixed,
And as with one, who gliding down a stream
On summer eve, sees pass before his eyes
A thousand flowery plains, my thoughts are drawn
Into thy reveries!

DOÑA SOL.

This silence is
Too deep, and too profound the calm. Say, now,
Wouldst thou not like to see a star shine forth
From out the depths — or hear a voice of night,
Tender and sweet, raise suddenly in song?

HERNANI (*smiling*).

Capricious one! Just now you fled away
From all the songs and lights.

DOÑA SOL.

Ah yes, the ball!
But yet a bird that in the meadow sings,
A nightingale in moss or shadow lost,
Or flute far off. For music sweet can pour
Into the soul a harmony divine,
That like a heavenly choir wakes in the heart
A thousand voices! Charming would it be!
[*They hear the sound of a horn from the shade.*
My prayer is heard.

HERNANI (*aside trembling*).

Oh, miserable man!

DOÑA SOL.

An angel read my thought — 'twas thy good angel
Doubtless?

HERNANI (*bitterly*).
Yes, my good angel! (*Aside.*)
There, again!

DoÑA SOL (*smiling*).
Don Juan, I recognize your horn.

HERNANI.
Is't so?

DoÑA SOL.
The half this serenade to you belongs?

HERNANI.
The half, thou hast declared it.

DoÑA SOL.
Ah, the ball
Detestable! Far better do I love
The horn that sounds from out the woods! And since
It is your horn 'tis like your voice to me.
[*The horn sounds again.*]

HERNANI (*aside*).
It is the tiger howling for his prey!

DoÑA SOL.
Don Juan, this music fills my heart with joy.

HERNANI (*drawing himself up and looking terrible*).
Call me Hernani! call me it again!
For with that fatal name I have not done.

DoÑA SOL (*trembling*).
What ails you?

HERNANI.
The old man!

DoÑA SOL.
Oh God, what looks!
What is it ails you?

HERNANI.

That old man who in
The darkness laughs. Can you not see him there?

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, you are wand'ring! Who is this old man?

HERNANI.

The old man!

DOÑA SOL.

On my knees I do entreat
Thee, say what is the secret that afflicts
Thee thus?

HERNANI.

I swore it!

DOÑA SOL.

Swore!

[She watches his movements with anxiety. He stops suddenly and passes his hand across his brow.]

HERNANI (*aside*).

What have I said?

Oh, let me spare her. (*Aloud.*)

I — nought. What was it

I said?

DOÑA SOL.

You said ——

HERNANI.

No, no, I was disturbed ——

And somewhat suffering I am. Do not
Be frightened.

DOÑA SOL.

You need something? Order me,
Thy servant.

[The horn sounds again.]

HERNANI (*aside*).

Ah, he claims! he claims the pledge!

He has my oath. (*Feeling for his dagger.*)
Not there. It must be done!

Ah!——

DoÑA SOL.
Suff'rest thou so much?

HERNANI.

'Tis an old wound
That I thought healed—it has reopened now. (*Aside.*)
She must be got away. (*Aloud.*)

My best beloved,
Now listen; there's a little box that in
Less happy days I carried with me——

DoÑA SOL.

Ah,
I know what 'tis you mean. Tell me your wish.

HERNANI.
It holds a flask of an elixir which
Will end my sufferings.— Go!

DONA SOL.

I go, my Lord.
[*Exit by the door to their apartments.*]

SCENE 4.

HERNANI (*alone*).

This, then, is how my happiness must end!
Behold the fatal finger that doth shine
Upon the wall! My bitter destiny
Still jests at me.

[*He falls into a profound yet convulsive reverie. Afterwards he turns abruptly.*]

Ah, well! I hear no sound.

'Am I myself deceiving?——

[*The MASK in black domino appears at the balustrade of the steps. HERNANI stops petrified.*]

SCENE 5.—HERNANI. THE MASK.

THE MASK.

“Whatsoe’er
May happen, what the place, or what the hour,
Whenever to thy mind it seems the time
Has come for me to die — blow on this horn
And take no other care. All will be done.”
This compact had the dead for witnesses.
Is it all done?

HERNANI (*in a low voice*).
’Tis he!

THE MASK.

Unto thy home
I come, I tell thee that it is the time.
It is my hour. I find thee hesitate.

HERNANI.

Well then, thy pleasure say. What wouldst thou
Of me?

THE MASK.

I give thee choice ’twixt poison draught
And blade. I bear about me both. We shall
Depart together.

HERNANI.

Be it so.

THE MASK.

Shall we
First pray?

HERNANI.

What matter?

THE MASK.

Which of them wilt thou?

HERNANI.

The poison.

THE MASK.

Then hold out your hand.

[He gives a vial to HERNANI, who pales at receiving it.
Now drink,

That I may finish.

[HERNANI lifts the vial to his lips, but recoils.

HERNANI.

Oh, for pity's sake

Until to-morrow wait! If thou hast heart
Or soul, if thou art not a spectre just
Escaped from flame, if thou art not a soul
Accursed, for ever lost; if on thy brow
Not yet has God inscribed His "never." Oh
If thou hast ever known the bliss supreme
Of loving, and at twenty years of age
Of wedding the beloved; if ever thou
Hast clasped the one thou lovedst in thine arms,
Wait till to-morrow. Then thou canst come back!

THE MASK.

Childish it is for you to jest this way!
To-morrow! why, the bell this morning toll'd
Thy funeral! And I should die this night,
And who would come and take thee after me!
I will not to the tomb descend alone,
Young man, 'tis thou must go with me!

HERNANI.

Well, then,

I say thee nay; and, demon, I from thee
Myself deliver. I will not obey.

THE MASK.

As I expected. Very well. On what
Then didst thou swear? Ah, on a trifling thing,

The mem'ry of thy father's head. With ease
Such oath may be forgotten. Youthful oaths
Are light affairs.

HERNANI.

My father! — father! Oh
My senses I shall lose!

THE MASK.

Oh, no — 'tis but
A perjury and treason.

HERNANI.

Duke!

THE MASK.

Since now
The heirs of Spanish houses make a jest
Of breaking promises, I'll say Adieu!
[*He moves as if to leave.*]

HERNANI.

Stay!

THE MASK.

Then —

HERNANI.

Oh cruel man! [*He raises the vial.*]
Thus to return

Upon my path at heaven's door!

[*Re-enter DOÑA SOL without seeing the MASK, who is standing erect near the balustrade of the stairway at the back of the stage.*]

SCENE 6.— *The Same.* DOÑA SOL.

DOÑA SOL.

I've failed
To find that little box.

HERNANI (*aside*).

Oh God! 'tis she!

At such a moment here!

DOÑA SOL.

What is't, that thus

I frighten him,—e'en at my voice he shakes!

What hold'st thou in thy hand? What fearful thought!

What hold'st thou in thy hand? Reply to me.

[*The DOMINO unmasks, she utters a cry in
recognizing DON RUY.*

'Tis poison!

HERNANI.

Oh, great Heaven!

DOÑA SOL (*to* HERNANI).

What is it

That I have done to thee? What mystery

Of horror? I'm deceived by thee, Don Juan!

HERNANI.

Ah, I had thought to hide it all from thee.

My life I promised to the Duke that time

He saved it. Aragon must pay this debt

To Silva.

DOÑA SOL.

Unto me you do belong,

Not him. What signify your other oaths?

(*To* DON RUY GOMEZ).

My love it is which gives me strength, and, Duke,

I will defend him against you and all

The world.

DON RUY GOMEZ (*unmoved*).

Defend him if you can against

An oath that's sworn.

DOÑA SOL.

What oath?

HERNANI.

Yes, I have sworn.

DOÑA SOL.

No, no; naught binds thee; it would be a crime,
A madness, an atrocity — no, no,
It cannot be.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Come, Duke.

[HERNANI makes a gesture to obey. DOÑA SOL tries to stop him.]

HERNANI.

It must be done.

Allow it, Doña Sol. My word was pledged
To the Duke, and to my father now in heaven!

DOÑA SOL (to DON RUY GOMEZ).

Better that to a tigress you should go
And snatch away her young, than take from me
Him whom I love. Know you at all what is
This Doña Sol? Long time I pitied you,
And, in compassion for your age, I seemed
The gentle girl, timid and innocent,
But now see eyes made moist by tears of rage.

[She draws a dagger from her bosom.]

See you this dagger? Old man imbecile!
Do you not fear the steel when eyes flash threat?
Take care, Don Ruy! I'm of thy family.
Listen, mine Uncle! Had I been your child
It had been ill for you, if you had laid
A hand upon my husband!

[She throws away the dagger, and falls on her knees before him.]

At thy feet

I fall! Mercy! Have pity on us both.
Alas! my Lord, I am but woman weak,
My strength dies out within my soul, I fail

So easily; 'tis at your knees I plead,
I supplicate — have mercy on us both!

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Doña Sol!

DOÑA SOL.

Oh, pardon! With us Spaniards
Grief bursts forth in stormy words, you know it.
Alas! you used not to be harsh! My uncle,
Have pity, you are killing me indeed
In touching him! Mercy, have pity now,
So well I love him!

DON RUY GOMEZ (*gloomily*).

You love him too much!

HERNANI.

Thou weapest!

DOÑA SOL.

No, my love, no, no, it must
Not be. I will not have you die. (*To DON RUY.*)
To-day

Be merciful, and I will love you well,
You also.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

After him; the dregs you'd give
The remnants of your love, and friendliness.
Still less and less.— Oh, think you thus to quench
The thirst that now devours me? (*Pointing to HERNANI.*)
He alone

Is everything. For me kind pityings!
With such affection, what, pray, could I do?
Fury! 'tis he would have your heart, your love,
And be enthroned, and grant a look from you
As alms; and if vouchsafed a kindly word
'Tis he would tell you — say so much, it is
Enough,— cursing in heart the greedy one
The beggar, unto whom he's forced to fling

HERNANI (*taking the vial*).

Oh, God!

DoÑA SOL.

Not thus would'st thou
Have left me mine. But thou! not thine the heart
Of Christian wife! Thou knowest not to love
As Silvas do — but I've drunk first — made sure.
Now drink it, if thou wilt!

HERNANI.

What hast thou done,
Unhappy one?

DoÑA SOL.

'Twas thou who willed it so.

HERNANI.

It is a frightful death!

DoÑA SOL.

No — no — why so?

HERNANI.

This philtre leads unto the grave.

DoÑA SOL.

And ought
We not this night to rest together? Does
It matter in what bed?

HERNANI.

My father, thou
Thyself avengest upon me, who did
Forget thee! (*He lifts the vial to his mouth.*)

DoÑA SOL (*throwing herself on him*).

Heavens, what strange agony!
Ah, throw this philtre far from thee! My reason
Is wand'ring. Stop! Alas! oh, my Don Juan,
This drug is potent, in the heart it wakes

A hydra with a thousand tearing teeth
Devouring it. I knew not that such pangs
Could be! What is the thing? 'tis liquid fire.
Drink not! For much thou'dst suffer!

HERNANI. (*To DON RUY.*)

Is cruel! Could'st thou not have found for her
Another drug? *[He drinks and throws the vial away.]*

DOÑA SOL.
What dost thou?

HERNANI.

What thyself

Hast done.

DOÑA SOL.
Come to my arms, young lover, now.
[They sit down close to each other.]
Does one not suffer horribly?

HERNANI.

No, no.

DOÑA SOL.
These are our marriage rites! But for a bride
I'm very pale, say am I not?

HERNANI.

Ah me!

DON RUY GOMEZ.
Fulfilled is now the fatal destiny!

HERNANI.

Oh misery and despair to know her pangs!

DOÑA SOL.
Be calm. I'm better.—Towards new brighter light
We now together open out our wings.

Let us with even flight set out to reach
A fairer world. Only a kiss — a kiss! [They embrace.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Oh, agony supreme!

HERNANI (*in a feeble voice*).

Oh bless'd be Heav'n

That will'd for me a life by spectres followed,
And by abysses yawning circled still,
Yet grants, that weary of a road so rough,
I fall asleep my lips upon thy hand.

DON RUY GOMEZ.

How happy are they!

HERNANI (*in voice growing weaker and weaker*).

Come — come, Doña Sol,

All's dark. Dost thou not suffer?

DOÑA SOL (*in a voice equally faint*).

Nothing now.

Oh, nothing.

HERNANI.

Seest thou not fires in the gloom? ¹

DOÑA SOL.

Not yet.

HERNANI (*with a sigh*).

Behold — (*He falls.*)

DON RUY GOMEZ (*raising the head, which fall again*).

He's dead!

DOÑA SOL (*dishevelled and half raising herself on the seat*).

Oh no, we sleep.

He sleeps. It is my spouse that here you see.

¹ Certain poisons are said to produce among their dreadful effects, the appearance of fire when the sufferer is near death.— TRANS.

We love each other — we are sleeping thus.

It is our bridal. (*In a failing voice.*)

I entreat you not

To wake him, my Lord Duke of Meudocé,

For he is weary. (*She turns round the face of HERNANI.*)

Turn to me, my love.

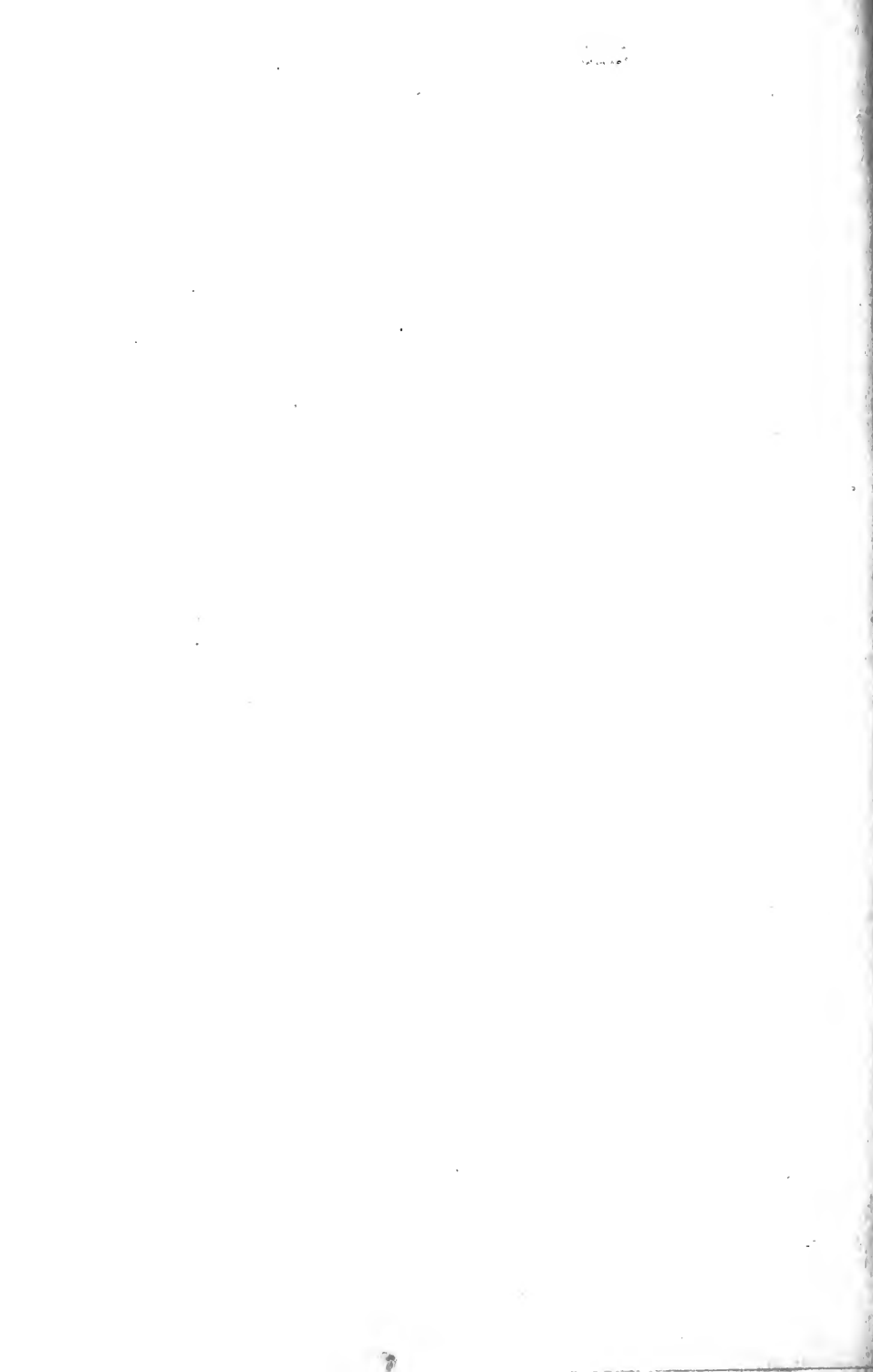
More near — still closer —

[*She falls back.*]

DON RUY GOMEZ.

Dead! Oh, I am damn'd!

[*He kills himself.*]



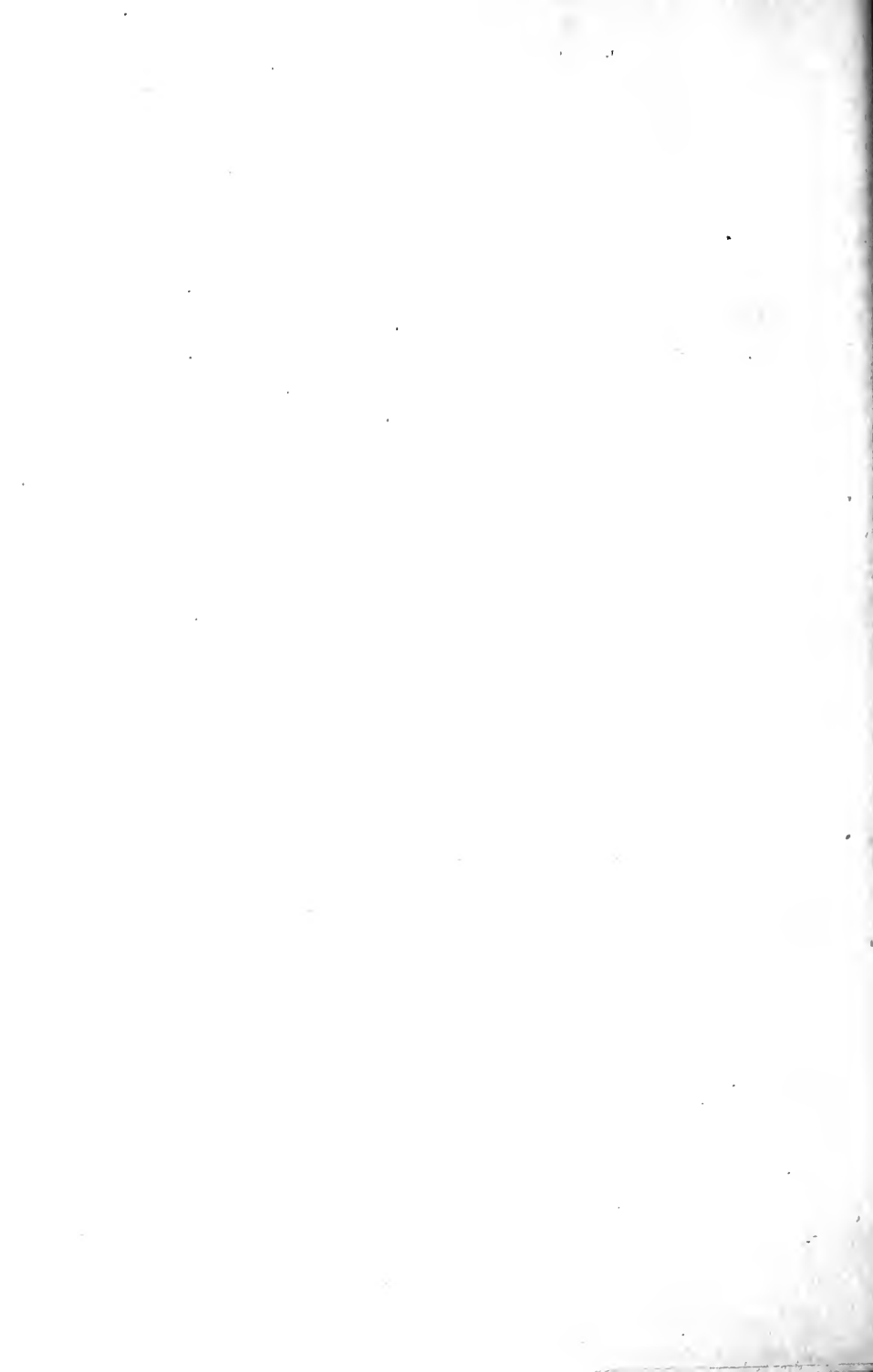
THE KING'S DIVERSION.

(LE ROI S'AMUSE!)

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

(1832.)

TRANSLATED BY FREDERICK L. SLOUS.



TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

"LE ROI S'AMUSE" was produced for the first time at the *Théâtre Français* on the 22nd of November, 1832, and suppressed next day by ministerial authority.

This unusual interference drew from Victor Hugo an immediate publication of the work; in the Preface to which he expresses not only considerable indignation at so illegal an act, but unbounded surprise that the French government should have interdicted the future progress of his drama, after a first and successful representation.

In my opinion, his astonishment ought to have been greater that "LE ROI S'AMUSE" was allowed to appear before the public at all.

It was not to be expected that so dangerous an attack on the rights and privileges of monarchy could be permitted to receive the nightly plaudits and awaken the republican sympathies of a Parisian audience. Under pretence of placing Francis the First, the sensualist and debauchee, in a well-merited pillory for public execration, a sly opportunity was both afforded and taken, for a pretty plentiful dirt-flinging — not only at Francis in particular, but at royalty and aristocracy in general: and our ingenious author must have wofully deceived himself in imagining that he could so easily elude the jealous vigilance of a government, as yet too insecurely established to bid defiance to the sarcasms of a writer, at once brilliant and powerful.

The political tendency of the tragedy was, I conceive, the sole cause of its suppression. There could be no objection to it on the score of immorality. The French public and the dramatic censor were too much accustomed to the style

of the romantic school to be startled by "LE ROI S'AMUSE." The well-educated Parisian sups on a dish of horrors — à la Victor Hugo, or à la Alexander Dumas — with as much relish as on the most tempting selections from the carte of the *Trois Frères*; he has no apprehensions that nightmares may result from the one, or indigestion from the other; he is accustomed to, and therefore requires excitement; and if he has any complaint to urge against our talented author, it might be, that his play is too little distinguished by the diableries of the modern school,— that its crimes are all served up *au naturel*, and that it lacks the rich seasoning and high infernal flavour of *Lucrèce Borgie* or *la Tour de Nesle*. The English reader may perhaps object that in this, as in most of Victor Hugo's productions, there is not one really good or noble character — that in scanning the actions of the entire *dramatis personæ*, the eye of the reader, like that of poor TRIBOULET in the text, becomes a-weary with the sight of crime, and that the heart has no single spot of virtue or magnanimity where it may repose awhile from the shocks which the perpetual aspect of vice has inflicted. Alas, it is but too true! Yet notwithstanding this defect, one powerful argument may be advanced in its favour.

Unlike so many of the most favoured dramas of the French school, "LE ROI S'AMUSE" contains no attempt to gloss over or inculcate the doctrines of immorality; there is no insidious endeavour to seduce the imagination, or pervert the judgment by making sophistry eloquent, or vice attractive. On the contrary, as the Spartans intoxicated their Helots to make their children abhor drunkenness, so does Victor Hugo exhibit the hideousness of crime to the open detestation of the beholder; and although I am inclined to believe that both Lycurgus and Victor Hugo would have evinced greater wisdom and feeling, had they presented examples of excellence to be revered, rather than depravity to be avoided, still the reader will, I think, agree with me, that it is better that our feelings should be wounded by the thorns, from amidst which we are compelled to gather the roses of poetry and imagination, than

that the innocence of youth should be tempted to encounter the serpent, concealed in the basket of flowers.

Of the characters but little need be said. Natural, but not profound, they are the creatures of circumstances, and require no acute critic to render their motive and feelings comprehensible.

Of *BLANCHE*, the offspring of sorrow, the victim of crime, little can be said in condemnation. The least criminal of the personages in the drama, she is the most severely dealt with; — a little French Juliet, without the intensity of feeling of Shakespeare, she is a weak-headed, warm-hearted girl of sixteen, and acts accordingly.

FRANCIS THE FIRST, according to history, was a sensualist, a profligate, and a man *sans foi ni loi*, the hero of Marignan, the defeated of Pavia, who, when he lost everything "*fors l'honneur*," lost all but that which he did *not* possess. History has given us the outlines of his character. Victor Hugo has filled up the sketch with so vigorous a pencil, and so dark a shadowing, that I trust, for the sake of human nature, he may be considered to have slightly exaggerated the foibles of *le Roi des Gentilshommes*. The poor King of the Casket in the Arabian Nights, living and breathing above, was from the waist downwards a mass of black marble. *FRANCIS*, on the contrary, is gay and animated throughout; with one little exception, his heart, which indeed is marble of the blackest hue.

TRIBOULET — the deformed, the Hunchback, is a being of a different nature from Quasimodo;¹ and his character is drawn with a singular mixture of power and inconsistency. He is a cynic, and not a jester — rude, but not witty. His hatred malignant and undignified, and the retribution attendant upon it is more than commensurate with his guilt.

ST. VALLIER is seen but little. His intention of sacrificing his daughter Diana to the embraces of a deformed old Senechal, abates much of the sympathy that his sorrows would

¹ The Hunchback of Nôtre Dame.

otherwise deserve; and it is matter for regret that he is so soon consigned to oblivion and the Bastille.

With regard to the interest of the piece itself,—which presents a strange mixture of unity and inconsistency — of wonderful beauties, and glaring defects, it may be summed up in a few words.

The plot is simple and unfettered by episode,—increasing in interest throughout, and at length rising in its catastrophe to a pitch of horrible sublimity, unequalled in any drama I have yet seen.

The incidents also are arranged so as to produce the most striking dramatic effects; but, occasionally, it must be confessed that they depart even from the extreme license of probability, and that the characters are frequently made to do that which mature reflection would not acknowledge as naturally resulting from the situations in which they are placed. On the other hand, the language is so much the language of nature and feeling — of eloquence and sincerity, that the reason forgets for a moment the contradictions of cause and effect. By a sort of verbo-electrotype process, Victor Hugo has showered down a brilliant surface of the purest gold, which entirely conceals the inferiority of the substance beneath, and the mind of the reader, dazzled by the lustre of the thin, though genuine metal, is content to forgive the inconsistent materials, which so splendid a covering invests.

F. L. S.

Note.—It is perhaps necessary to observe that the French drama, more rigid with regard to unity of place than ours,—seldom allows more than one *painted* scene to each Act; and the reader is requested to bear in mind that, according to the French text, when Scene I., II., III., &c., are mentioned, nothing but the entrance of another personage on the stage is understood.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE¹

THE production of this drama on the stage has given rise to a Ministerial action unprecedented.

The morning after its first representation the author received from M. Jouslin de la Salle, stage-manager of the Théâtre Français, the following letter, the original of which he carefully preserves:—

“It is half-past ten o'clock, and I have just received the *order*² to suspend the representation of ‘Le Roi s'Amuse.’ It is M. Taylor who communicates this command from the Minister.

“November 23.”

The first emotion of the author was incredulity. The act was so arbitrary he could not believe in it.

Indeed what is called the *True Charter* says:—The French have the right to publish——” Observe, the text does not say only the right to print, but clearly and forcibly the *right to publish*. Now the theatre is only one manner of publication, as the press, or engraving, or lithography is. The liberty of the theatre is therefore implied in the Charter with all other freedom of thought. The fundamental law adds:—*Censorship must never be re-established*. Now the text does not say *censorship of journals or of books*, it says *censorship* in general, all censorship, that of the theatre as of writing. The theatre, then, henceforth cannot recognize the legality of censorship.

Besides, the Charter says, *Confiscation is abolished*. Now the suppression of a theatrical piece after its representation

¹ This preface was not translated by Mr. Slous, nor was it included in the original edition of his version, which appeared first in 1843.—Ed.

² This word is underlined in the letter.

is not only a monstrous act of arbitrary censorship, it is a veritable confiscation, a robbery of the theatre and of the author.

Indeed, that all should be clear and unmistakable, and that the four or five great social principles which the French Revolution has moulded in bronze may rest intact on their pedestals of granite, and that the rights of Frenchmen should not be stealthily attacked by the forty thousand notched weapons which in the arsenal of our laws are destroyed by rust and disuse, the Charter in its last article expressly abolishes all which in our previous laws should prove contrary to its text and its spirit.

This is certain. The Ministerial suppression of a theatrical piece, attacks liberty by censorship and property by confiscation. The sense of our public rights revolts against such a proceeding.

The author not believing in so much insolence and folly, hastened to the theatre. There the fact was confirmed in every particular. The Minister had, indeed, on his own authority, by his divine right of Minister, issued *the order* in question. He gave no reason. The Minister had taken away the author's piece, had deprived him of his rights, and of his property. There only remained that he should send the poet to the Bastille.

We repeat that at the time in which we live, when such an act comes to bar your way and roughly take you by the throat, the first emotion is one of profound astonishment. A thousand questions present themselves to the mind. What is the law? Where is the authority? Can such things happen? Is there, indeed, a something which is called the Revolution of July? It is clear that we are no longer in Paris. In what Pashalic do we live?

Stunned and astonished, the authorities of the Comédie Française took some measures to obtain from the Minister a revocation of his strange decision; but the trouble was wasted. The divan, I should say the Council of Ministers, had assembled in the morning. On the 23rd it was only an

order of the Minister, on the 24th it was an edict of the Ministry. On the 23rd the piece was *suspended*; on the 24th its representation was definitely prohibited. It was even enjoined that from the play-bills should be erased the formidable words, *Le Roi s'Amuse*. Besides all this the authorities were even forbidden to make any complaint, or breathe a word on the subject. Perhaps it would be grand, loyal, and noble to resist a despotism so Asiatic; but managers of theatres dare not. Fear lest their privileges should be revoked makes them subjects and serfs, to be taxed and controlled at will as vassals, eunuchs, and mutes.

The author will remain and ought to remain aloof from these proceedings of the theatre. He, the poet, depends not on any Minister. Those prayers and solicitations which his interests, pitifully considered, may perhaps counsel, his duty as an untrammelled writer forbids. To ask permission of power is to acknowledge it. Liberty and property are not things of the ante-chamber. A right is not to be treated as a favour. For a favour sue from the Minister; but claim a right from the country.

It is, then, to the country that he addresses himself. There are two methods of obtaining justice — by public opinion, or the tribunals of the law. He chooses them both.

By public opinion the cause has already been judged and gained. And here the author ought to thank warmly those established and independent personages associated with literature and art, who on this occasion have given so many proofs of sympathy and cordiality. He calculated beforehand on their support. He knows that when he enters on the struggle for freedom of thought he will not be unsupported in the battle.

And let us here observe in passing that power, by a sufficiently contemptible calculation, flattered itself that it should on this occasion find auxiliaries even in the ranks of its opponents in the literary enmities so long aroused by the author. It believed that literary animosity was still more tenacious than political, because the first had its roots in self-love, the

second only in interest. But the Government has deceived itself. Its brutal act has proved revolting to honest men in every camp. The author saw rally round him to show a bold front against an arbitrary act of injustice even those who had attacked him the most violently only the day before. If by chance some inveterate enemies remained, they regret now that they gave a momentary support to power. All the loyal and honourable of his foes have stretched out their hands to the author, ready to recommence the literary battle as soon as the political should be finished. In France whoever is persecuted has no longer an enemy except the persecutor.

If now, after having agreed that the Ministerial act is odious, unjustifiable, and impossible to be defended, we descend for a moment to discuss it as a material fact, and seek for some of the elements which may have composed it, the first question which presents itself to everyone is this:—"What can be the motive of such a measure?"

We must say it because it is the truth, if the future some day is occupied with our little men and our little things, this will not be the least curious detail of this curious event. It appears that our censors pretend to be shocked at the immorality of *Le Roi s'Amuse*; this piece offends the modesty of the police; the brigade Léotaud considers it obscene; the decider on morals has veiled his face; it has made M. Vidocq blush. In short, the censor's order to the police, and that for some days has been stammered round about us, is simply *that the piece is immoral*. Ho, there, my masters! Silence on that point.

Let us explain ourselves, however, not to the police, to whom I, an honest man, forbear to speak on these matters, but to the small number of respectable and conscientious persons who on hearsay, or after having seen the performance imperfectly, have been persuaded into an opinion of which, perhaps, the name of the poet implicated ought to have been a sufficient refutation. The drama is printed to-day. If you were not present at the representation, read it. If you

were there, still read it. Remember that that representation was less a performance than a battle, a sort of battle of Montihéry (let this somewhat ambitious comparison pass), where the Parisians and the Burgundians each pretended to have "*pocketed*" the victory, as Matthieu said.

The piece is immoral? Think you so? Is it from its subject? Triboulet is deformed, Triboulet is unhealthy, Triboulet is a court buffoon — a threefold misery which renders him evil. Triboulet hates the king because he is king, the nobles because they are nobles, and he hates ordinary men because they have not humps on their backs. His only pastime is to set the nobles unceasingly against the king, crushing the weaker by the stronger. He depraves the king, corrupts and stultifies him; he encourages him in tyranny, ignorance, and vice. He lures him to the families of gentlemen, pointing out the wife to seduce, the sister to carry off, the daughter to dishonour. The king in the hands of Triboulet is but an all-powerful puppet which ruins the lives of those in the midst of whom the buffoon sets him to play. One day, in the midst of a fête, at the moment when Triboulet is urging the king to carry off the wife of M. de Cossé, M. de Saint-Vallier reaches the presence chamber, and in a loud voice reproaches the king for the dishonour of Diana de Poitiers. This father, from whom the king has taken his daughter, is jeered at and insulted by Triboulet. Then the father stretches forth his hand and curses Triboulet. It is from this scene the whole play develops. The real subject of the drama is *the curse of M. de Saint-Vallier*. Attend. You are in the second act. On whom has this curse fallen? On Triboulet as the king's fool? No. On Triboulet as a man, a father who has a heart and has a daughter. Triboulet has a daughter, all in that is expressed. Triboulet has but his daughter in the world, and he hides her from all eyes in a solitary house in a deserted quarter. The more he spreads in the town the contagion of debauchery and vice, the more he seeks to isolate and immure his daughter. He brings up his child in faith, innocence, and modesty. His greatest

fear is that she may fall into evil, for he knows, being himself wicked, all the wretchedness that is endured by evil-doers. Well, now! The old man's malediction will reach Triboulet through the only being in the world whom he loves, his daughter. This same king whom Triboulet urges to pitiless vice will be the ravisher of Triboulet's daughter. The buffoon will be struck by Providence precisely in the same manner as was M. de Saint-Vallier. And more, his daughter once ruined, he lays a snare for the king by which to avenge her; but it is she that falls into it. Thus Triboulet has two pupils — the king and his daughter — the king, whom he has trained to vice, his daughter, whom he has reared for virtue. The one destroys the other. He intends Madame de Cossé to be carried off for the king, it his daughter that is entrapped. He wishes to kill the king, and so avenge his child; it is his daughter whom he slays. Punishment does not stop half-way; the malediction of Diana's father is fulfilled on the father of Blanche.

Undoubtedly it is not for us to decide if this is a dramatic idea, but certainly it is a moral one.

The foundation of one of the author's other works is fatality. The foundation of this one is Providence.

We repeat expressly that we are not now addressing the police, we do them not so much honour, but that part of the public to whom this discussion may seem necessary. Let us proceed.

If the work is moral in its invention, is it that it was immoral in its execution? The question thus put seems to contradict itself; but let us see. Probably there is nothing immoral in the first and second acts. Is it the situation in the third which shocks? Read this third act, and tell us in all honesty if the impression which results be not profoundly one of chastity and virtuous principle.

Is it the fourth act which is objectionable? But when was it not permitted for a king on the stage to make love to the servant at an inn? The incident is not new either in history or the drama. And more, history shows us Francis the First

in a drunken state in the hovels of the Rue du Pelican. To take a king into a viler place is not more new. The Greek theatre, which is the classical, has done it. Shakespeare, whose plays are of the romantic, has done it. The author of this drama has not. He knows all that has been written about the house of Saltabadil. But why represent him to have said what he has not said? Why in a similar case make him overleap a barrier which he has not passed? This Bohemian Maguelonne, so much censured, is assuredly not more brazen than the Lisettes and Marions of the old theatre. The cottage of Saltabadil is a tavern, an hostelry, the pothouse of *The Fir-Cone*, a suspected cut-throat place, we admit, but not still viler. It is terrible, horrible, evil and fearful if you will, but it is not an obscene place.

There remain, then, the details of style. Read. The author accepts for judges of rigid strictness of his style even those persons who are startled at Juliet's nurse, and Ophelia's father, and by Beaumarchais and Regnard, by *L'Ecole des Femmes* and *Amphitryon*, Dandin and Sganarelli, and the grand scene of *Tartuffe* — *Tartuffe*, accused also of immorality in his day. Only there where he has found it necessary to be clear he has thought it his duty to be so at all risks and perils, but always with seriousness and moderation. He desires art to be chaste, but not prudish.

Behold, however, this piece concerning which the Minister has made so many accusations! This immorality, this obscenity — here is the piece laid bare. What a pity! Authority had its hidden reasons, and we shall indicate them presently, for raising against *Le Roi s'Amuse* the strongest prejudice possible. It wished that the public should stifle this piece from a distorted imagination, without hearing or understanding it, even as Othello stifles Desdemona. *Honest Iago!*

But as it finds that Othello has not stifled Desdemona, Iago unmask and charges himself with the task. The day following the representation the piece is prohibited *by order*.

Certainly if we condescend for a moment to accept the

ridiculous fiction that on this occasion it is care for public morality which actuates our rulers, and that shocked at the state of licence into which certain theatres have fallen during the last two years, they have chosen at the end, in defiance of all laws and rights, to make an example of a work and an author — certainly if the choice of the work be singular, it must be admitted the choice of the author is not less so. Who is the man whom purblind power controls so strangely? It is a writer so placed that if his talents may be questioned by all, his character cannot be by anyone. It is acknowledged that he is an honest man, proved and verified — a thing rare and to be respected just now. He is a poet whom this same licentiousness of the theatre revolted and made indignant from the first; who for the last eighteen months, on the report that the inquisition of theatres was to be equally re-established, has gone in person in the company of many other dramatic authors to warn the Minister against such a measure; and who loudly demanded a law repressive of riot in the theatre, protesting against the censorship in strong language which certainly the Minister has not forgotten. He is an artist devoted to art, who has never courted success by unworthy means, and who has all his life accustomed himself to look the public steadily in the face. He is a moderate and sincere man, who has fought more than one battle for liberty against arbitrary rule; who, in 1829, in the last year of the Restoration, refused all that the Government then offered him to compensate for the interdict placed on *Marion de Lorme*,¹ and who a year later, in 1830, the Revolution of July having taken place, refused, against his worldly interests, to allow the performance of this same *Marion de Lorme* lest it should be the occasion of insult and attack upon the deposed king who had prohibited it; conduct undoubtedly quite natural, and which would have been that of any man of honour in his place, but which, perhaps, should have rendered him hence-

¹ In allusion to the offer of Charles the Tenth to grant the author a fresh pension of 4,000 francs as compensation for the suppression of *Marion de Lorme*.—TRANS.

forth safe from censure, and in reference to which he wrote in August, 1834:—"The success of political allusions and sought-for scandals he avows pleases him but little. Such success is short-lived and of little value. Besides, it is precisely when there is no censorship that authors should themselves be honest, conscientious, severe censors. Thus it is they raise the dignity of art. When there is perfect liberty, it is becoming to keep within bounds."

Judge now. On one side you have a man and his works; on the other the Minister and his actions.

Now that the pretended immorality of this drama is reduced to a nonentity; now that the scaffolding of false and shameful reasons is thrown down and lies under our feet, it is time to notice the true motives of the measure, the motive of the antechamber, the motive of the Court, the secret motive which is not told, the motive that cannot be avowed even to themselves, the motive that has been so well hidden under a pretext. This motive has already transpired to the public, and the public has divined correctly. We shall say no more about it. It may be useful to our cause that we offer to our adversaries an example of courtesy and moderation. It is right that a lesson of dignity and good sense should be given to the Government by an individual, by him who was persecuted to the persecutor. Besides, we are not of those who think to cure their own wounds by poisoning the sores of others. It is but too true that in the third act of this piece there is a line in which the ill-placed cleverness of some of the intimates of the palace has discovered an allusion (mark a moment — an allusion!) of which neither the public nor the author had dreamed until then, but which, once denounced in this manner, becomes the most cruel of injuries. It is but too true that this verse sufficed for the order that in announcements concerning the Théâtre Français the seditious little phrase of *Le Roi s'Amuse*, should never again be allowed to satisfy the curiosity of the public. We shall not cite here this verse, which is as red-hot iron, we shall not even indicate it, save in a last extremity should they be so imprudent as

to drive us there for our defence. We will not cause the revival of old historic scandals. We will spare as much as possible a personage in a high position the consequences of this stupidity of courtiers. One may make war generously even on a king. We wish to do thus. Only let the powerful ones reflect on the inconvenience it is to have for a friend the brute who only knows how to crush with the paving-stone of censorship the microscopic allusions which have just been placed before their faces.

We cannot even tell if in this conflict we shall not feel indulgent towards the Minister himself. The whole thing, to speak the truth, inspires us with pity. The Government of July is as yet but new born, it is but thirty months old, and is still in its cradle; it has the little furies of babyhood. Does it deserve that we should spend on it much manly anger? When it is grown up we shall see about that.

However, to look at the question for a moment only from the private point of view, the censorial confiscation of which he complains does more harm, perhaps, to the author of this drama than a like injury could do to any other dramatist. Indeed, during the fourteen years that he has written, not one of his works has escaped the unlucky honour of being chosen on its appearance for a battle-field, and which has not at first, for a longer or shorter period, been obscured by the dust, and the smoke, and the noise of the conflict. Thus, when he produces a piece at the theatre — not being able to hope for a calm audience on the first night — that which concerns him most is a series of representations. If it happens that on the first occasion his voice is drowned in the tumult and his ideas are not comprehended, the following representations may correct first impressions. *Hernani* has been performed fifty-three times, *Marion de Lorme* sixty-one; *Le Roi s'Amuse*, thanks to Ministerial oppression, has only been represented once. Assuredly the wrong done to the author is great. Who can render to him exactly what this third experience — so important to him — might have brought? Who can tell him what might have followed that first per-

formance? Who can restore that public of the next day — a public usually impartial — the public that is without friendships and without enmities, that teaches the poet, and that the poet teaches?

The period of political transition in which we now are is curious. It is one of those moments of general weariness when all acts of despotism are possible, even in a society infiltrated by ideas of emancipation and liberty. France moved fast in July, 1830; she did three days' good work; she made three great advances in the field of civilization and progress. Now in the march of progress many are harassed, many are out of breath, many require to halt. They would hold back those generous, unwearying spirits who do not falter, who still go on. They would wait for the tardy who remain behind, and give them time to join us. There is a singular fear in these of all that advances, of all that stirs, of all that protests, of all who think. A strange frame of mind, easy to comprehend, difficult to define. These are the beings who are afraid of new ideas. It is the league of interests that are ruffled by theories. It is commerce frightened at systems; it is the merchant who wants to sell; it is tumult which terrifies the counting-house; it is the shopkeeper armed to defend himself.

In our opinion Government makes use of this let-alone disposition and fear of revolutionary novelties. It stoops to petty tyrannies. All this is bad for it and for us. If it believes that there is now a feeling of indifference to liberal ideas it deceives itself; there is only a certain weariness. Some day it will be called severely to account for the illegal acts which have accumulated for some time past. What a life it has led us! Two years ago we feared for order, now we tremble for liberty. Questions of free thought, intelligence, and art are imperiously quelled by the viziers of the king of the barricades. It is indeed melancholy to see how the revolution of July is terminating, *mulier formosa superne*.

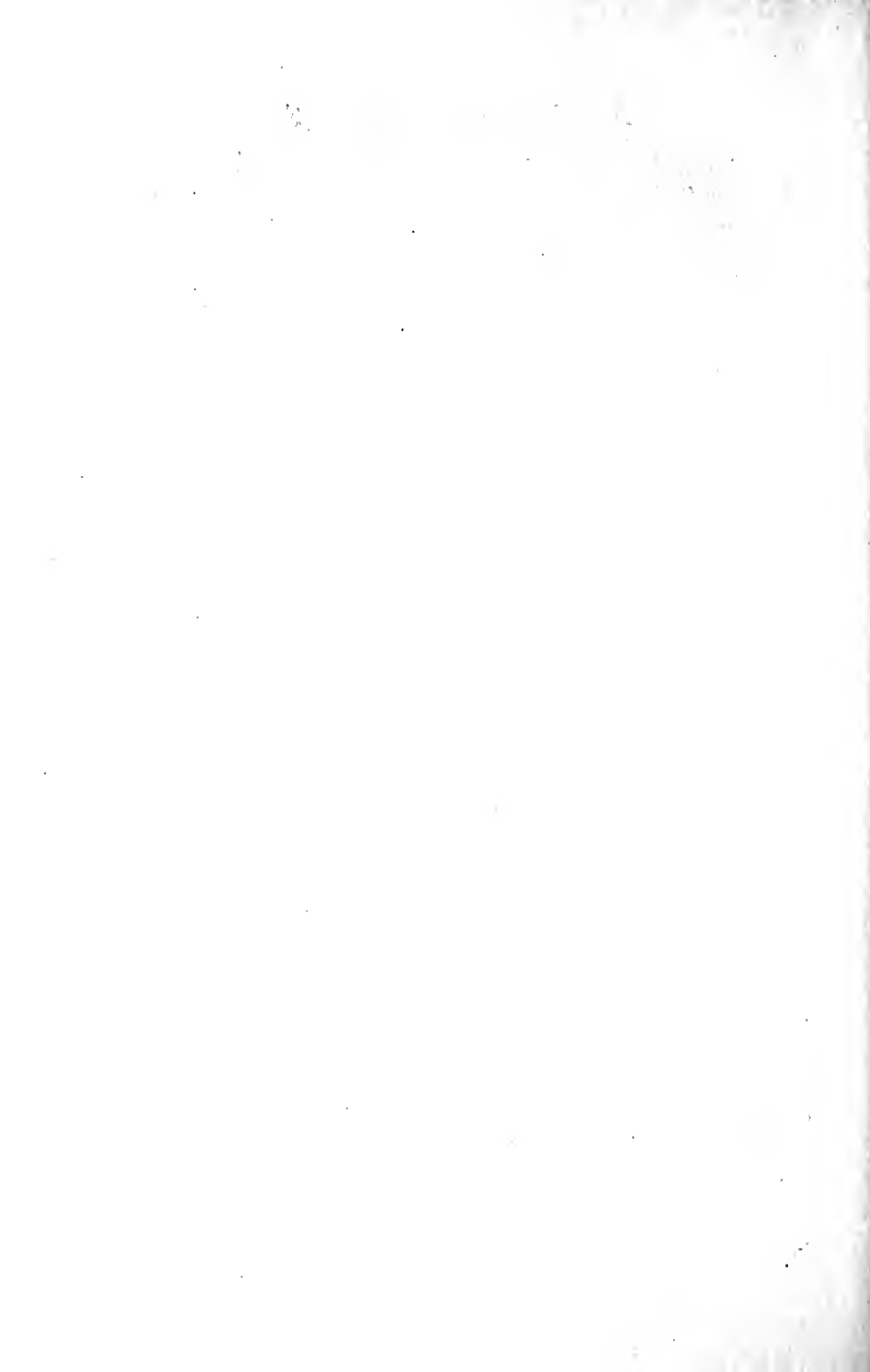
Certainly, if one reflects of how little consequence the work or the author under consideration is, the Ministerial measure

against them is of no great importance. It is only a mischievous little blow to literature, which has no other merit than not being too unlike numerous arbitrary acts of which it is the sequel. But if we take a loftier view we shall see that it does not only effect this play and this poet, but, as we said from the first, the rights of liberty and property are both entirely concerned in the question. These are great and serious interests; and though the author is obliged to associate this affair with the simple commercial interests of the Théâtre Français — not being able to attack directly the Minister barricaded behind the plea of being a counsellor of state — he hopes that his cause will appear to everyone a great cause on the day when it shall be presented at the bar of the consular tribunal, with liberty on the right hand and property on the left. He will speak himself, if need be, in aid of the independence of his art. He will plead for his rights firmly, with gravity and simplicity, without hatred or fear of anyone. He counts on the co-operation of all, on the frank and cordial support of the press, on the justice of public opinion, on the equity of tribunals. He will succeed. He doubts it not. The state of siege will be raised in the city of literature as in the city politic.

When this shall be done, when he shall have brought to his home intact, inviolate, and sacred the liberty of a poet and a citizen, he will again set himself peaceably to the work of his life, from which he has been so violently forced, and from which he would not willingly abstain for a moment. He has his task before him, he knows it, and nothing shall distract him from it. For the moment political work comes to him; he has not sought, but he accepts it. Truly the power which encounters us will not have gained much when we indignant and offended artists quit our conscientious, peaceful, earnest and sacred work — our work of the past and of the future — to mix ourselves with an irreverent and scoffing assembly, who for fifteen years have watched, amid hooting and whistling, the wretched political bunglers who imagined they were building a social edifice because every day, with great trouble,

sweating and panting, they wheeled a heap of legal projects from the Tuileries to the Palais-Bourbon, and from the Palais-Bourbon to the Luxembourg!

November 30th, 1832.



PERSONAGES OF THE DRAMA

FRANCIS THE FIRST.

TRIBOULET, *The Court Jester.*

MONS. ST. VALLIER.

MONS. DES GORDES.

MONS. DE PIENNE.

MONS. DE LATOUR LANDRY.

MONS. DE VIC.

MONS. DE PARDAILLAN.

MONS. DE COSSÉ.

MONS. DE BRION.

MONS. DE MONTMORENCY.

MONS. DE MONTCHENÛ.

MAÎTRE CLEMENT MAROT, *The Court Poet.*

SALTABADIL, *A Bravo.*

BLANCHE, *Daughter to Triboulet.*

DAME BERARDE, *A Duenna.*

MAGUELONNE, *Sister to Saltabadil.*

MADAME DE COSSÉ.

A Messenger from the Queen.

A Servant of the King.

A Surgeon.

Courtiers, Ladies, Servants.



THE KING.

Near Bussy's Terrace, where De Cossé dwells,
She lives immured.

LA TOUR.

I think I know the spot,
That is, the outside. Not, perchance, so well
As doth your Majesty the heaven within.

THE KING.

Nay, there you flatter; entrance is denied.
A beldam fierce, who keeps eyes, ears, and tongue
Under her guidance, watches ever there.

LA TOUR.

Indeed!

THE KING.

And then, oh, mystery most rare!
As evening falls, a strange unearthly form,
Whose features night conceals, enshrouded close
In mantle dark, as for some guilty deed,
Doth glide within.

LA TOUR.

Then do thou likewise.

THE KING.

Nay.

The house is barred and isolate from all.

LA TOUR.

At least the fair one, with such patience wooed,
Hath shewn some signs of life.

THE KING.

I do confess,
If glances speak the soul, those witching eyes
Proclaim no hatred insurmountable.

LA TOUR.

Knows she a monarch loves?

THE KING.

Impossible!

A homely garb, a student's woollen dress
Conceals my quality.

LA TOUR.

Oh, virtuous love!

That burns with such a pure undying flame.
I warrant me 'tis some sly Abbé's mistress.

(*Enter TRIBOULET, and a number of courtiers.*)

THE KING.

Hush! some one comes!

(*Aloud to TRIBOULET, as he approaches.*)

Silence his lips must seal

Whose love would prosper!—Have I said aright?

TRIBOULET.

To shade the fragile vase, glass lends its veil;
Thus flimsy mystery hides love more frail.

SCENE 2.—*The KING, TRIBOULET, M. DE GORDES, and many other Gentlemen, superbly dressed. TRIBOULET is in the dress of the Court Fool, as painted by Bonifacio. The KING turns to admire a group of Ladies.*

LA TOUR.

Madame de Vendome looks, to-night, divine.

DE GORDES.

Fair D'Albe and Montchevreuil blaze like twin stars.

THE KING.

Now, in my eyes, De Cossé's charming wife
Outshines all three.

DE GORDES (*Pointing to M. DE COSSÉ, surnamed LE BRANTOME, one of the four fattest gentlemen of France*).

Hush! hush, your majesty!

Unless you mean this for a husband's ear.

THE KING.

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She lives immured.

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Unless you mean this for a husband's ear.

THE KING.

Why, for that matter, Count, i'faith I care not.

DE GORDES.

He'll tell the fair Diana.

THE KING.

What care I?

[The KING retires to speak to some ladies at the back of the stage.]

TRIBOULET (to M. DE GORDES).

The King will anger Dian of Poitiers.

For eight long days he holds not converse with her.

DE GORDES.

Will he restore her to her husband's arms?

TRIBOULET.

Indeed, I hope not.

DE GORDES.

She hath paid in full

A guilty ransom for her father's life.

TRIBOULET.

Ah! apropos, now, of St. Vallier.—

'Tis a most strange and singular old man:

How could he think to join in nuptial bond

His daughter Dian, radiant as the light,

(An angel sent by Heaven to bless this earth),

With an ill-favoured hunch-backed seneschal?

DE GORDES.

'Tis an old fool — a pale and grave old man.

When pardon came, I stood beside the block,—

Aye, nearer much than now I do to thee,—

Yet said he nothing, but “God bless the King!”

And now he's quite distraught!

THE KING (*passing across with MADAME DE COSSÉ*).

Unkind! so soon?

MADAME DE COSSÉ.

My husband takes me with him to Soissons.

THE KING.

Oh! 'tis a sin! Paris forbids thy flight —
 Paris, where wits and courtiers languish all
 With melting tenderness and fond desires —
 Where duellists and poets ever keep
 Their keenest thrusts, their brightest thoughts for thee;
 For thee, whose glances, winning every heart,
 Warn each fair dame to watch her lover well;
 Dazzling our court with such a flood of light.
 Thy sun once set, we ne'er shall think 'tis day.
 Canst thou abandon kings and emperors,
 Dukes, princes, peers, and condescend to shine
 (Thou star of town!) in a vile country heaven?

MADAME DE COSSÉ.

Be calm.

THE KING.

As though some sacrilegious hand
 Amidst the brightest splendour of the dance
 Had from the ball-room torn the chandelier.

MADAME DE COSSÉ.

My jealous lord!
 (*She points to her husband approaching, and runs away.*)

THE KING.

The devil claim his soul!

(*Turning to TRIBOULET.*)

But I have penned a sonnet to his wife.
 Has Marot shewn thee those last rhymes of mine?

TRIBOULET.

I never read your verses,—royal strains
Are always vile.

THE KING.

Oh, bravo!

TRIBOULET.

Let the herd

Rhyme love with dove —'tis their vocation thus;
Monarchs, with beauty, take a different course;
Make love, oh sire, and let Marot make verse —
It but degrades a king.

THE KING.

[Sees MADAME DE COSLIN, to whom he turns, leaving

TRIBOULET. (To TRIBOULET.)

I'd have thee whipped

If fair de Coslin did not tempt me hence.

TRIBOULET (*aside*).

Another still! Oh, fickle as the wind
That blows thee to her.

DE GORDES (*approaching TRIBOULET*)

By the other door

Madame de Cossé comes! I pledge my faith
She drops some token that the amorous king
May turn to raise it.

TRIBOULET.

Let's observe awhile.

(MADAME DE COSSÉ drops her bouquet.)

DE GORDES.

I said so!

TRIBOULET.

Excellent!

[The KING leaves MADAME DE COSLIN, picks up the bouquet, and presents it to MADAME DE COSSÉ, with

whom he enters into a lively conversation, apparently of a tender nature.

DE GORDES.

The bird's re-snared!

TRIBOULET.

Woman's a devil of most rare perfection!

[*The KING whispers MADAME DE COSSÉ — she laughs. Suddenly M. DE COSSÉ draws near, coming from the back of the stage. DE GORDES remarks it to TRIBOULET.*

DE GORDES.

Her husband!

[*MADAME DE COSSÉ sees her husband — disengages herself from the KING, and runs off.*

MADAME DE COSSÉ.

Leave me!

TRIBOULET.

What a jealous fright

Shakes his fat side, and wrinkles o'er his brow.

(*The KING who has been helped to wine comes forward.*)

THE KING.

Oh happy hours! Why, Jupiter himself,
And Hercules, were two poor senseless fools,
Compared to me! 'Tis woman gilds this earth.
I am all happiness! — and thou? (*To TRIBOULET.*)

TRIBOULET.

All joy!

I laugh at balls, pomps, follies, guilty loves;
And sneer whilst you enjoy. Yet both are blest;
You as a King, and as a hunchback I.

THE KING.

De Cossé damps the fête; but let that pass.

How does he look now, think you?

(*Pointing to DE COSSÉ, who is leaving the palace.*)

TRIBOULET.

Like an ass!

THE KING.

Nought plagues me save this corpulent old Count;

Mine is the power to do;— to wish! — to have!

Oh, Triboulet, what pleasure 'tis to live! —

The world's so happy!

TRIBOULET (*aside*).

And the King is drunk.

THE KING.

'Ah, there again! What arms! — what lips! — what eyes!

TRIBOULET.

Madame de Cossé?

THE KING (*to TRIBOULET*).

Take thou charge of me.

THE KING (*sings*).

“Paris, bright and gay,
Nowhere is thy fellow —
All thy girls are ripe —”

TRIBOULET (*sings*).

“And all thy men are mellow.”

[*Exit KING and TRIBOULET.*]

SCENE 3.— *Enter MONS. DE GORDES, PARDAILLAN, DE VIC, MAÎTRE CLEMENT MAROT, the Poet; after them M. DE PIENNE, and DE COSSÉ — (they salute).*

DE PIENNE.

Most noble friends, a novelty I bring —

A riddle that would cheat the shrewdest brain;

A something comic, wonderful, sublime;
A tale of love! a thing impossible!

DE GORDES.

What is't?

MAROT.

What would'st thou, noble Sir?

DE PIENNE.

Marot, I tell thee, thou'rt a mighty fool.

MAROT.

Mighty! I ne'er did think myself in aught.

DE PIENNE.

I read in your last poem of "Peschére"
These lines on Triboulet: "One marked for scorn —
As wise at thirty as the day when born."
Thou art the fool!

MAROT.

May Cupid stop my breath,

If I can take you.

DE PIENNE.

Hark ye, now, De Gordes,

And you, De Pardaillan, I pray ye, guess,
Something most strange has chanced to Triboulet.

DE PARDAILLAN.

He's become straight.

DE COSSÉ.

Or Constable of France.

MAROT.

Or cooked and served up at the royal table.

DE PIENNE.

No! — droller still, he has — (you ne'er can guess —
The thing's incredible).

DE PARDAILLAN.

Perhaps an ape
More ugly than himself.

MAROT.

His starving purse
Grown plethoric with gold.

DE COSSÉ.

The fitting place
Of turnspit dog.

MAROT.

A billet-doux to meet
The blessed Virgin, up in Paradise.

DE GORDES.

Perhaps a soul!

DE PIENNE.

Ye ne'er will strike the mark.
The buffoon, Triboulet, uncouth, deformed —
Guess what he has! Come! something monstrous! Guess!

MAROT.

His hump!

DE PIENNE.

Nay! nay! ye're dull.— Now listen all!
A mistress!!! (*All burst into a fit of laughter.*)

MAROT.

Duke, your wit o'ershoots its aim.

DE GORDES.

A scurvy joke!

DE PIENNE.

I'll swear it, by my soul.
I'll bring you even to the lady's door
Each night he enters, shrouded in his cloak
With air most sombre — like some hungry bard
By happiest chance I spied the quarry out,

Prowling myself, hard by De Cossé's gate.
Now keep my secret: I've a scheme to plague him.

MAROT.

A sonnet!—"Triboulet to Cupid changed!
Yet this much I'll engage! should ever more
Another Bedford land on France's shore,
The English foes would dare our arms in vain,
The lady's face would fright them back again."
[*All laugh — M. DE VIC drawing near — DE PIENNE
puts his finger to his lips.*

DE PIENNE.

Silence, my Lords!

DE PARDAILLAN.

How comes it that the King
Roams every night alone, as though he sought
Some amorous quest.

DE PIENNE (*to DE VIC*).

De Vic will tell us that.

DE VIC.

Just now the wind of his caprice doth sit
To wander forth, in hood and cloak disguised,
That none can know him! If the night's so dark,
He doth mistake some window for a door,
Why (not being married) 'tis no care of mine.

DE COSSÉ.

Ah! who would own a sister, child, or wife?
The King robs others of the joys he takes,
And for his pleasure, makes another's woe.
The laughing mouth has fangs most sharp within.

DE VIC (*to DE PIENNE and MAROT*).

He trembles at the King.

DE PIENNE (*aside*).

His pretty wife

Feels no alarm.

MAROT (*aside*).

'Tis that which frightens him.

DE GORDES (*aloud*).

You're wrong, De Cossé; 'tis a courtier's task
To keep the King kind, liberal and gay.

DE PIENNE.

Amen, say I: — a melancholy king
Is like long mourning or a backward spring.

SCENE 4.— *Enter the KING and TRIBOULET.*

TRIBOULET.

Scholars at court! Monstrosity most rare!

THE KING.

Go, preach unto my sister of Navarre,
She'd set me round with pedants!

TRIBOULET.

Sire, at least

You'll own I've drunk a somewhat less than you,
And therefore crave I to decide this matter
In all its points, shapes, hues, and qualities.
I've one advantage, nay, I'll reckon two.
First, I am sober, next, I'm not a king.
Rather than summon scholars to the court,
Bring plague and famine!

THE KING.

Yet my sister strives

To fill my court with scholars.

TRIBOULET.

Most unkind

Upon a sister's part.— Believe me, Sire,
There's not in nature's strange menagerie,
Nor hungry wolf, nor crow, nor fox, nor dog,
Nor famished poet, heretic nor Turk,
Nor hideous owl, nor bear, nor creeping sloth
One half so hungry, hideous, filthy, foul,
Puffed with conceits and strange absurdities,
As that same animal, yclept a scholar.
Have you not pleasures, conquests, boundless power,
And (shedding light and perfume over all)
Enchanting woman?

THE KING.

Marguerite avers
That woman's love may tempt me not for long,
And when it palls —

TRIBOULET.

Oh medicine most strange!
Prescribe a pedant, for a heart that's cloyed.
The Lady Marguerite, 'tis widely known,
Was ever famed for desperate remedies.

THE KING.

I'll have no scholars,— poets might be borne.

TRIBOULET.

Now, were I king, I'd loathe a poet more
Than Beelzebub doth sign of holy cross.

THE KING.

But some half dozen!

TRIBOULET.

'Tis a stable full,—
'A whole menagerie. We've quite enough
Of Marot here, without being poison'd quite
With flimsy rhymesters.

MAROT.

Thank you, good buffoon,—
(*Aside*) The fool were wiser, had he held his tongue.

TRIBOULET.

Be beauty still your heaven; 'tis the Sun
Whose smiles illumine earth. Ne'er clog your brain
With books.

THE KING.

Nay, by the faith, now, of a gentleman
For books care I as much as fish for apples.

[*Shouts of laughter are heard from a group of courtiers behind.*]

Methinks, good fool, they're merry at thy cost.

TRIBOULET (*draws near to the group, listens, and returns*).
Another fool they laugh at!

THE KING.

Aye! whom, then?

TRIBOULET.

The King!!

THE KING.

At me?

TRIBOULET.

Yes, Sire, they call you mean:
Say gold and honours fly into Navarre,
Whilst they get nothing.

THE KING.

Now, I note them well!
Montmorency, Brion, and Montchenû.

TRIBOULET.

Exactly so.

THE KING.

Ungrateful, selfish hounds!
One I made admiral,— constable the next,

And Montchenû my master of the horse; —
Yet they complain!

TRIBOULET.

Why, 'tis not quite enough;
They still deserve something at your hands: —
Best do it quickly, Sire.

THE KING.

Do what?

TRIBOULET.

Hang up all three.

DE PIENNE (*pointing to TRIBOULET, and speaking to the
three Courtiers*).

You heard him?

DE BRION (*to DE PIENNE*).

Aye, indeed.

MONTMORENCY (*to DE PIENNE*).

He smarts for this.

TRIBOULET (*to the KING*).

Your heart methinks must feel a painful void,
Knowing, amongst these yielding fair, not one
Whose eyes invite not, yet whose soul could love.

THE KING.

What knowest *thou* of this?

TRIBOULET.

The love of one,

Whose heart hath lost the bloom of innocence,
Is love no longer.

THE KING.

Art thou then so sure

I have not found one woman who can love?

TRIBOULET.

Thy rank unknown?

THE KING (*assenting*).

Unknown!! (*aside*) I'll not betray
My little beauty of De Bussy's Terrace.

TRIBOULET.

Some city belle!

THE KING.

Why not?

TRIBOULET (*with agitation*).

Oh Sire, beware!

Your love runs hazards that it dreams not of;
These citizens, in wrath, are fierce as Romans.
Who takes their goods may leave a life in pledge:
We kings and fools still satisfied should be
With the fair wives and sisters of our friends.

THE KING.

Methinks De Cossé's wife would suit me well.

TRIBOULET.

Then take her.

THE KING.

Marry, 'tis a hopeless thing;
Easy to say,—to do, impossible!!

TRIBOULET.

Command it, Sire, this very night 'tis done.

THE KING (*pointing to De Cossé*).

Her jealous Husband,—

TRIBOULET.

Send to the Bastille!

THE KING.

Oh, no!

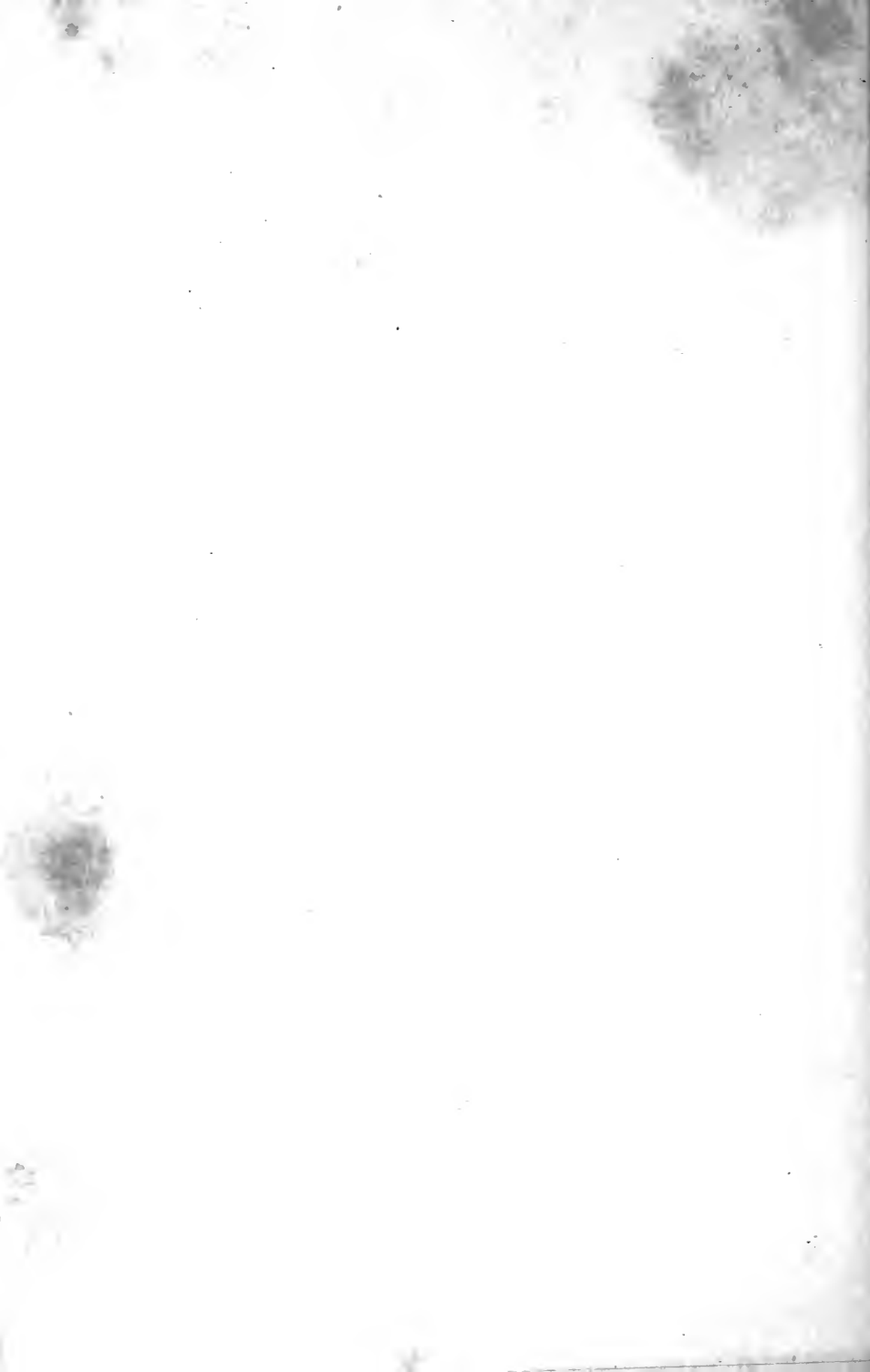
TRIBOULET.

Well, then, to balance the account,
Create him Duke.



Triboulet "Nay, I fear thee not;
A war of words on all around I wage, and care for nothing."

Dramas. The King's Diversion: Act. I, Sc. IV, Page 189.



THE KING.

His vulgar jealousy
Might still rebel and trumpet forth his wrongs.

TRIBOULET.

He must be banished then or bought. Yet stay!

[*Whilst TRIBOULET is speaking, DE COSSÉ comes up and overhears the rest of the speech.*

There is one method, simple and concise,—

'Tis strange it stepped not first into my mind;—

Cut off his head!! [DE COSSÉ starts back with affright.

Involve him in some plot—

Some scheme to help the arms of Spain or Rome.

DE COSSÉ (*coming between*).

Infernal villain!

THE KING (*to TRIBOULET*).

Nay, now, think again;

Cut off a head like that,— impossible!

TRIBOULET.

What, be a king, yet foiled in a caprice,—

A paltry trifle such as this denied.

DE COSSÉ (*to TRIBOULET*).

I'll have thee beaten.

TRIBOULET.

Nay, I fear thee not:

A war of words on all around I wage,

And care for nothing, whilst my neck doth bear

The sacred head and cap-piece of the fool.

But one thing fear I,— that my hump might fall

And plant itself in front, as thou dost wear it:

'Twould quite disfigure me!

DE COSSÉ (*overcome with rage, draws his sword*).

Ill-manner'd slave!

THE KING.

Be wiser, Count! Come hither, fool, with me!

[*Exeunt KING and TRIBOULET laughing.*
(*The COURTIERs assemble after KING has retired.*)

DE BRION.

Vengeance on Triboulet!

MAROT.

He's too well armed;
How can we strike, or where inflict the blow?

DE PIENNE.

I have it, gentlemen; the wrongs of all
Shall be avenged in full. When evening falls
Meet me, well armed, at Bussy's Terrace wall,
Near to De Cossé's gate; ask nought beside.

MAROT.

I guess thy scheme.

DE PIENNE.

Be silent all; he comes!

TRIBOULET (*aside*).

Whom next to trick? — the King? By heaven! 'twere great!
[*Enter a Servant in the KING's livery, who whispers to*
TRIBOULET.

SERVANT.

Monsieur St. Vallier (an infirm old man
In deepest mourning) asks to see the King.

TRIBOULET.

(*Aside*) The Devil! — (*aloud*) Oh certainly; most glad to see
Monsieur St. Vallier. [Exit Servant.

(*Aside*) Excellent, by Jove!

This is a joke that makes all others tame —

(*There is a noise and confusion at the door of entrance.*)

VOICE OUTSIDE.

I'll see the King!

THE KING (*stopping short in his attentions to a group of ladies.*

Who dares to enter here?

VOICE OUTSIDE.

I'll see the King!

THE KING.

No! no!

[*An old man in deep mourning, with white hair and beard, bursts through the crowd at the back of the stage, and confronts the KING, gazing steadily upon him.*

SCENE 5.—*The KING, ST. VALLIER, TRIBOULET and the COURTIER.*

ST. VALLIER.

I will be heard!

Who dare restrain me?

THE KING (*appalled*).

Monsieur St. Vallier!

ST. VALLIER.

'Tis thus I'm named!

[*The KING advances angrily towards him, but is stopped by TRIBOULET.*

TRIBOULET.

Permit me, Sire, to speak.

I will so bravely lecture this good man!

[*Puts himself in a theatrical attitude, and addresses ST. VALLIER.*

TRIBOULET.

Sir! you once stirred rebellion 'gainst our throne;
We pardoned, as kind monarchs should; yet now

A stranger, wilder madness takes your mind,—
 You seek for offspring from a son-in-law
 As hideous as the vilest dwarf e'er known,
 Ill-shaped, ill-bred, pale, ghastly, and deformed,
 An odious wart upon his monstrous nose,
 A shape like that! (*pointing to DE COSSÉ*)

An ugly hump like mine!
 Who sees your daughter near him, needs must laugh.
 (Unless our King had interfered), he might
 Have made rare specimens of grandsons for you,
 Diseased, unseemly, rickety, misshaped,
 Swoll'n like that gentleman,
 [*pointing to DE COSSÉ, who writhes with anger.*

Or humped like me.

Bah! he's too ugly;— now, our noble King
 Will give you grandsons, that may be your pride,
 To climb your knee and pluck your reverend beard!
 [*The Courtiers laugh and applaud TRIBOULET.*

ST. VALLIER.

'Tis but one insult more;— now hear *me*, Sire,
 A king should listen when his subjects speak:
 'Tis true, your mandate led me to the block,
 Where pardon came upon me, like a dream;
 I blessed you then, unconscious as I was
 That a king's mercy, sharper far than death,
 To save a father doomed his child to shame;
 Yes, without pity for the noble race
 Of Poitiers, spotless for a thousand years,
 You, Francis of Valois, without one spark
 Of love or pity, honour or remorse
 Did on that night, (thy couch her virtue's tomb,)
 With cold embraces, foully bring to scorn
 My helpless daughter, Dian of Poitiers.
 To save her father's life, a knight she sought,
 Like Bayard, fearless and without reproach.
 She found a heartless king, who sold the boon,

Making cold bargain for his child's dishonour.
 Oh! monstrous traffic! foully hast thou done!
 My blood was thine, and justly, tho' it springs
 Amongst the best and noblest names of France;
 But to pretend to spare these poor grey locks,
 And yet to trample on a weeping woman,
 Was basely done; the father was thine own,
 But not the daughter! — thou hast overpassed
 The right of monarchs! — yet, 'tis mercy deemed,
 And I, perchance, am called ungrateful still.
 Oh, hadst thou come within my dungeon walls,
 I would have sued upon my knees for death,
 But mercy for my child, my name, my race,
 Which, once polluted, is my race no more;
 Rather than insult, death to them and me.
 I come not now to ask her back from thee;
 Nay, let her love thee with insensate love;
 I take back nought that bears the brand of shame.
 Keep her! — Yet still amidst thy festivals,
 Until some father's, brother's, husband's hand,¹
 ('Twill come to pass,) shall rid us of thy yoke,
 My pallid face shall ever haunt thee there,
 To tell thee, Francis, it was foully done!
 And thou shalt listen, and thy guilty pride
 Shall shrink abashed before me; would you now
 Command the headsman's axe to do its office,
 You dare not, lest my spectre should return
 To tell thee —

THE KING.

Madness! (*To DE PIENNE.*)

Duke! arrest the traitor.

¹ According to ancient writers, St. Vallier's prophecy was terribly fulfilled. The death of Francis the First affords a melancholy illustration of the morals of the "good old times." Whether the story be the record of history, or the invention of slander, we have only to choose between the malignity of the falsehood, or the infamy of the fact. A sad alternative for the believer in the supremacy of the past.— F. L. S.

TRIBOULET (*sneering at St. Vallier*).

The poor man raves.

ST. VALLIER.

Accursed be ye both!

Oh, Sire! 'tis wrong upon the dying lion

To loose thy dog (*turns to TRIBOULET*).

And thou, who'er thou art,

That with a fiendish sneer and viper's tongue,

Makest my tears a pastime and a sport,

My curse upon thee! — Sire, thy brow doth bear

The gems of France! — on mine, old age doth sit;

Thine decked with jewels, mine with these grey hairs;

We both are Kings, yet bear a different crown;

And should some impious hand upon thy head

Heap wrongs and insult, with thine own strong arm

Thou canst avenge them! — GOD AVENGES MINE!

[*St. Vallier is led off — the curtain falls.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT SECOND: SALTABADIL

SCENE 1.—*The scene represents a deserted corner of De Bussy Terrace. On the right a house of decent appearance, with a court-yard in front (surrounded by a wall), which forms a part of the stage. In the court are some trees, and a stone seat. A door opens from the wall into the street. Above the wall is a terrace, with a roof supported by arches. A door from the first floor of the house opens upon this terrace, which communicates with the court by a flight of steps. On the left are the high walls of the De Cossé Palace, and in the background, distant houses and the steeple of St. Severin.*

TRIBOULET, SALTABADIL; afterwards DE PIENNE and
DE GORDES.

[TRIBOULET is enveloped in his cloak, but without his buffoon's dress—he advances cautiously towards the door in the wall. A man dressed in black, and likewise wrapped in a cloak (from beneath which the point of a sword peeps out), follows him stealthily.

TRIBOULET (*lost in thought*).

The old man cursed me.

SALTABADIL (*accosting him*).
Sir!

TRIBOULET.

[*starts, turns round, and searching in his pockets, says angrily,*

I've nothing for you.

SALTABADIL.

And nothing asked I: you mistake!

TRIBOULET (*irritated*).

Then leave me.

SALTABADIL (*bowing and touching his long sword*).
You wrong me, Sir.—By my good sword, I live.

TRIBOULET (*drawing back alarmed*).
A cut-throat!

[*Enter DE PIENNE and DE GORDES, who remain watching at the back of the stage.*]

SALTABADIL (*in an insinuating manner*).
Something weighs upon your mind:
Night after night, you haunt this lonely spot —
Confess the truth, some woman claims your care!

TRIBOULET.
That which concerns but me, I tell to none.

SALTABADIL.
But 'tis for your advantage that I speak;
You'd treat me better if you knew me well.
(*Whispers.*) Perhaps your mistress on another smiles,—
You're jealous, Sir?

TRIBOULET.
By all the fiends, what want ye?
SALTABADIL (*in a low voice, speaking softly and quickly*).
For some broad pieces, by this hand he dies!

TRIBOULET (*aside*).
I breathe again.

SALTABADIL.
I see you deem me now
An honest man.

TRIBOULET.
At least a useful one!

SALTABADIL (*with an assumption of modesty*).
Guard to the honour of our Paris dames.

TRIBOULET.
Name your price to slay a cavalier.

SALTABADIL.
Why that's according to the man we slay,
With some slight guerdon for the skill displayed.

TRIBOULET.
To stab a nobleman?

SALTABADIL.
By Beelzebub!
There's too much risk of a slashed doublet there:
Cunning in fence, and armed, your nobleman
Is dear indeed!

TRIBOULET (*laughing*).
Your nobleman is dear;
And pray, do citizens by your kind aid
Each other slaughter?

SALTABADIL.
Yes; in truth they do;
But 'tis a luxury — a taste you know
That's scarcely fit, but for the man well born.
Some upstarts are there (being rich forsooth),
That ape the habits of a gentleman,
And force my service,— How I pity them!
I'm paid one half beforehand, and the rest
When the deed's done!

TRIBOULET.
For this you brave the rack?

SALTABADIL (*smiling*).
Not much! a tribute paid to the police!

TRIBOULET.

So much per head?

SALTABADIL.

Just so! unless indeed —
(What shall I say?) unless the King were slain!

TRIBOULET.

And how contrive you?

SALTABADIL.

In the street I slay,
Or else at home!

TRIBOULET.

In a most courteous way?

SALTABADIL.

If in the street — a sharp keen blade I wear,
And watch my man at night.

TRIBOULET.

And if at home?

SALTABADIL.

Why then my sister Maguelonne assists —
A sprightly girl — that in the streets by night
Doth dance for gain, and, with enticing smiles,
Allures our prey, and draws the game to earth.

TRIBOULET.

I see!

SALTABADIL.

'Tis managed without noise or stir,
Quite decently! Nay, most respectably.
Now let me crave your patronage, good Sir;
You'll be contented, tho' I keep no shop,
Nor make parade; I am not of that race
Of coward cut-throats, armed from head to heel,
Who herd in bands to take a single life —

Wretches! with courage shorter than their sword.

[*Drawing an enormously long sword.*

This is my weapon! (TRIBOULET *starts.*)

(*Smiling and bowing to TRIBOULET.*) At your service, Sir!

TRIBOULET.

Just now, indeed, I've no occasion for it.

SALTABADIL.

So much the worse! You'll find me, when you list,

Before the palace of the Duke of Maine.

At noon each day I take my morning's stroll:

My name's Saltabadil!

TRIBOULET.

Of gipsy race?

SALTABADIL.

Burgundian too!

DE GORDES (*to DE PIENNE, taking out his tablets*).

A jewel of a man,

Whose name (lest I forget) at once I write.

SALTABADIL.

Sir, you'll not think the worse of me for this?

TRIBOULET.

What for! why should I? every one must live.

SALTABADIL.

I would not be a beggar, idler, rogue!

Then I've four children.

TRIBOULET.

Whom 'twere barbarous

To leave unfed.

[*Trying to get rid of him.*

Heaven keep you in its love!

DE PIENNE (*to DE GORDES*).

'Tis still too light! Return we here anon.

[*Exeunt DE PIENNE and DE GORDES.*

TRIBOULET (*roughly to SALTABADIL*).

Good day!

SALTABADIL (*bowing*).

Your humble servant, Sir. Adieu! [*Exit*].

TRIBOULET (*watching him as he retires*).

How much alike his cruel trade to mine;—

His sword is sharp, but with a tongue more keen

I stab the heart! Aye, deeper far than he.

SCENE 2.—TRIBOULET (*alone*).

[SALTABADIL *having departed*, TRIBOULET *gently opens the door in the wall. He looks anxiously round, and taking the key out of the lock, carefully shuts the door on the inside. He then paces the court with an air of melancholy and abstraction.*

TRIBOULET.

The old man cursed me! even as he spoke

I mocked and taunted him;—and yet, oh shame!

My lip but smiled. His sorrow touched my soul.

Accurst indeed!— [*he sits down on the stone seat.*

For man with nature leagues

To make me wicked, heartless, and depraved!

Buffoon! Oh, heav'n!—deformed, despised, disgraced;

Always that thought, or sleeping or awake,—

It haunts my dreams, and tortures me by day:

The vile buffoon—the wretched fool of court

Who must not, cannot, dare not, for his hire

Do aught but laugh! Oh grief! oh misery!

The poorest beggar, or the vilest slave,—

The very galley convict in his chains,

May weep and soothe his anguish with his tears.

Alas, I dare not! Oh, 'tis hard to feel

Bowed down to earth with sore infirmities;

Jealous of beauty, strength, or manly grace,—

With splendour circled, making me more sad.
In vain my wretchedness would hide from man,—
In vain my heart would sob its griefs alone.—
My patron comes,— the joyous, laughing king,
Beloved of women! heedless of the tomb;
Well shapen, handsome, King of France,— and young,
And with his foot he spurns me as I hide;
And, yawning, cries, “Come, make me laugh, buffoon.”
Alas, poor fool! — and yet am I a man,
And rancorous hate, and pride, and baffled rage,
Boil in my brain, and make my soul like hell.
Ceaseless I meditate some dark design,
Yet, feeling, nature, thought, must I conceal,
And at my master’s sign make sport for all.
Abjection base! where’er I move to feel
My foot encumbered with its galling chain.
By men avoided, loathed, and trampled on; —
By women treated as a harmless dog.
Soh! gallant courtiers and brave gentlemen,
Oh, how I hate you! — here behold your foe;
Your bitter sneers I pay you back with scorn,
And foil and countermine your proud desires.
Like the bad spirit, in your master’s ear
I whisper death to each aspiring aim,
Scattering, with cruel pleasure, leaf by leaf,
The bud of hope — long ere it come to flower.
You made me wicked: — yet what grief to live
But to drop poison in the cup of joy
That others drink! — and if within my breast
One kindly feeling springs, to thrust it forth
And stun reflection with these jingling bells.
Amidst the feast, the dance, the glittering show,
Like a foul demon, seek I to destroy,
For very sport, the happiness of all,
Covering with hollow, false, malignant smile
The venomed hate, that festers at my heart.
Yet am I wretched! *[He rises from the stone seat.*

No, not wretched here!

This door once past, existence comes anew:
Let me forget the world,—no past regret
Shall dim the happiness that waits me here.

[He falls into a reverie.]

The old man cursed me! Why returns that thought?
Forebodes it evil? Pshaw! art mad? — for shame!

[He knocks at the door of the house. A young girl dressed in white rushes out, and throws herself into his arms.]

SCENE 3.—BLANCHE — TRIBOULET; afterwards DAME
BERARDE.

TRIBOULET.

My child! *[He presses her to his bosom with delight.]*

Ah, place your arms around my neck;

Come to my heart, my child! I'm happy now;

Near thee all's joy! I live, I breathe again.

[He gazes at her with transport.]

More beauteous every day. Blanche, art thou well,—

Quite well? Dear Blanche! come kiss me once again.

BLANCHE.

You are so kind, dear father.

TRIBOULET.

No, indeed,

I do but love thee. Thou'rt my life, my blood.

Blanche, if I lost thee! — oh, the thought is death.

BLANCHE (*putting her hand on his forehead*).

What makes you sigh so heavily, my father?

Tell me your sorrows; trust your grief with me.

Have we no kindred? Where are all our friends?

TRIBOULET.

Daughter, thou hast none.

BLANCHE.

Tell me then your name.

TRIBOULET.

Why would'st thou know it?

BLANCHE.

When at dear Chinon,

The little village where I lived before,
The neighbours call'd me orphan, till you came.

TRIBOULET.

'Twere far more prudent to have left thee there;
But I could bear my sad, sad life no longer;
I yearned for thee — I wanted one to love me.

BLANCHE.

Well, if you will not tell me of yourself —

TRIBOULET (*not listening to her*).

You go not out?

BLANCHE.

Two months have I been here,
And but eight times to mass gone forth.

TRIBOULET.

'Tis well.

BLANCHE.

At least you'll tell me of my mother now?

TRIBOULET.

No, no, forbear to wake that chord, my child.
Let me not think upon how much I've lost;
Wert thou not here I'd deem it all a dream:
A woman different from all womankind,
Who knew me poor, deserted, sick, deformed,
Yet loved me, even for my wretchedness.
Dying, she carried to the silent tomb
The blessed secret of her sainted love:
Love, fleeter, brighter than the lightning's flash;

A ray from Paradise, illuming Hell.
Oh, earth, press lightly on that angel breast,
Where only did my sorrow find repose.
But thou art here, my child. Oh God, I thank thee!
[*He bursts into tears.*]

BLANCHE.

Oh, how you weep! indeed I cannot bear
To see you thus — it makes me wretched too.

TRIBOULET.

Would'st have me laugh?

BLANCHE.

Dear father, pardon me.
Tell me your name,— confide your grief in me.

TRIBOULET.

I am thy father. Ask me not for more;
In this great world some hate me — some despise;
But here at least, where all is innocence,
I am thy father — loved, revered. No name
Is holier than a father's to his child.

BLANCHE.

Dear father!

TRIBOULET (*again embracing her*).

Ah, what heart responds like thine?
I love thee, as I hate all else beside.
Sit thee down by me. Come, we'll talk of this.
Art sure thou lov'st me? Now that we are here
Together, and thy hand is clasped in mine,
Why should we speak of anything but thee?
The only joy that Heaven vouchsafes, my child!
Others have parents, brothers, loving friends,
Wives, husbands, vassals, a long pedigree
Of ancestors, and children numerous —
But I have only thee! Some men are rich,

Thou art my only treasure, Blanche! my all.
Some trust in Heaven: I trust alone in thee.
What care I now for youth, or woman's love,
For pomp or grandeur, dignities or wealth?
These are brave things, but thou outweigh'st them all;
Thou art my country, city, family —
My riches, happiness, religion, hope —
My universe; I find them all in thee.
From all but thee, my soul shrinks, trembling, back.
Oh, if I lost thee! The distracting thought
Would kill me, if it lived one instant more!
Smile on me, Blanche! thy pretty, artless smile,
So like thy mother's; she was artless too.—
You press your hand upon your brow, my child,
Just as she did. My soul leaps forth to thine,
Even in darkness — I can see thee still —
For thou art day, and light, and life to me.

BLANCHE.

Would I could make you happy!

TRIBOULET.

Happy! Blanche!

I am so happy when I gaze on thee —
My very heart seems bursting with delight.

[Passes his hand through her hair, and smiles.]

What fine dark hair! I recollect it once
So very light! Who would believe it now?

BLANCHE.

Some day, before the curfew bell has tolled,
You'll let me take a walk, and see the town?

TRIBOULET.

Oh, never, never! Thou hast not left home
Unless with Dame Berarde?

BLANCHE.

Oh, no!

TRIBOULET.

Beware!

BLANCHE.

Forth, but to church, I go!

TRIBOULET.

(*Aside.*) She may be seen,
Perhaps pursued, torn from me, and disgraced.
Hah! were it so! the wretched jester's daughter
There's none would pity. (*Aloud.*) I beseech thee, Blanche,
Stir not abroad.—Thou know'st not how impure,
How poisonous is the Paris air to woman:
How heartless profligates infest the streets,
And courtiers baser still! (*Aside.*) Oh, Heaven, protect,
Watch o'er, preserve her from the damning snares
And touch impure, of libertines, whose breath
Hath blighted flowers pure and fair as she.
Let e'en her dreams be holy!—Here at least
Her hapless father, resting from his woes,
Shall breathe, with grateful heart, the sweet perfume
Of this fair rose of innocence and love!

[*He buries his face in his hands and bursts into tears.*]

BLANCHE.

I'll think no more of going out, dear father,
But do not weep.

TRIBOULET.

These tears relieve me, child.
So much I laughed last night:—but I forget,
The hour to bear my hated yoke draws nigh.
Dear Blanche, adieu!

BLANCHE (*embracing him*).

You'll soon be here again.

TRIBOULET.

Alas, I am not master of my will.

Ho! Dame Berarde! — Whene'er I visit here

[*An old duenna enters.*]

None see me enter?

BERARDE.

Nay, of course not, Sir!

This street's deserted!

[*It is now nearly dark, the KING appears outside the wall, disguised in a dark-coloured dress. He examines the high wall and closed door with gestures of impatience and disappointment.*]

TRIBOULET.

Dearest Blanche, adieu!

(*to DAME BERARDE*).

The door towards the quay is ever closed?

I know a house more lonely e'en than this,

Near St. Germain! I'll see to it to-morrow.

BLANCHE.

The terrace, father, is so pleasant here,

Above the gardens.

TRIBOULET.

Go not there, my child!

[*He listens.*]

Ha! footsteps near!

[*He goes to the gate, opens it, and looks out: the KING slips into a recess in the wall near the door, which TRIBOULET leaves open.*]

BLANCHE (*pointing to the terrace*).

But may I not at night

Breathe the pure air?

TRIBOULET.

Alas! you might be seen.

[*Whilst he is speaking to BLANCHE, his back towards the door, the KING slips in, unseen by all, and conceals himself behind a tree.*]

(To DAME BERARDE)

You let no lamp from out the casement shine.

BERARDE.

Why, gracious powers! what man could enter here?

[*She turns and sees the KING behind the tree. Just as she is about to cry out, the KING holds a purse out to her, which she takes, weighs in her hand, and is silent.*]

BLANCHE (to TRIBOULET, who has been to examine the terrace with a lantern.

Why dost thou look? — what fearest thou, my father?

TRIBOULET.

Nought for myself, but everything for thee.

Farewell, my child!

[*He again folds her in his arms; a ray of light from the lantern held by DAME BERARDE falls upon them.*]

THE KING.

The Devil! — Triboulet! (*he laughs*).

Triboulet's daughter! — why, the jest's divine.

TRIBOULET (*returning*).

'A thought disturbs me: — when from church you come

Has no one followed thee?

[*Blanche is confused and casts down her eyes.*]

BERARDE.

Oh, never, Sir!

TRIBOULET.

Shriek out for help, if any one molest

Or stop thy path.

BERARDE.

I'd scream and call the guard.

TRIBOULET.

Whoever knocks, keep closed to all the door.

BERARDE.

[Tho' 'twere the King?

TRIBOULET.

Much more if 'twere the King.

[*He embraces BLANCHE again, and goes out, carefully shutting the door after him.*

SCENE 4.—BLANCHE, DAME BERARDE, THE KING.

(*During the first part of this scene, the KING still remains behind the tree.*)

BLANCHE.

Yet feels my heart remorse.

BERARDE.

Remorse? — for what?

BLANCHE.

How sensitive to every fear he seems!
How every shadow darkens o'er his soul!
Ev'n as he left, his eyes were wet with tears.
Dear, good, kind father! should I not have told
How, every Sunday, when we leave the church,
He follows me! — you know! — that fine young man?

BERARDE.

Why speak of that? — already, unprovoked,
Your father's humour sets most fierce and strange;
Besides, of course, you hate this gentleman.

BLANCHE.

Hate him! — Ah, no! — Alas! I shame to say,
His image never fades upon my mind;
But from the hour when first his looks met mine,
Where'ere I gaze, methinks I see him there.
Would it were so! Oh, 'tis a noble form!
So gentle, yet so bold! so proud his mien!

Methinks upon a fiery courser's back
He'd look right nobly!

[*As Dame BERARDE stands near the KING, he puts a handful of gold into her hand.*]

BERARDE.

Well, he charms me too;

He's so accomplished.

BLANCHE.

Such a man must be —

BERARDE.

Discreet and wise!

BLANCHE.

His looks reveal his heart;

'Tis a great heart!

BERARDE.

Oh, wonderful! immense!

[*At every sentence that BERARDE speaks she holds out her hand to the KING, who puts money in it.*]

BLANCHE.

Courageous!

BERARDE.

Formidable!

BLANCHE.

Yet so kind!

BERARDE.

So tender!

BLANCHE.

Generous!

BERARDE.

Magnificent!

BLANCHE.

All that can please!

BERARDE.

His shape without a fault,—
His eyes, his nose, his forehead.
[*Holds out her hand for money at each word.*]

THE KING (*aside*).

Nay, by Jove,
If she admires in detail, I'm undone:
No purse can long resist, I'm stripped of all.

BLANCHE.

I love to speak of him.

BERARDE.

I know it, child

THE KING (*aside, giving more money*).
Oil upon fire.

BERARDE.

So tall, kind, handsome, good,
Great-hearted, generous.

KING (*aside*).

There! She's off again.

BERARDE.

'Tis some great nobleman, his airs so grand,
His glove I noted, broidered on with gold.
[*The KING makes signs when she holds out her hand,
that he has nothing left.*]

BLANCHE.

Oh no! I would not he were rich or great,
But some poor country student; for I think
He'd love me better.

BERARDE.

Well, it may be so,
If you prefer it! (*Aside*) Heavens! what a taste!
These love-sick girls will move by contraries.
[*Again holding out her hand to the KING.*]

(*Aloud.*) But this I'm sure, he loves you to despair.

[*The KING gives nothing.*

(*Aside.*) Is he then drained! No money, Sir! no praise!

BLANCHE.

How long it seems till Sunday comes again!
Until I see him, sadness with my soul
Dwells night and day; when on the altar last
My humble gifts I placed, he seemed as though
He would have spoken. How my heart did throb!
Oh I am sure, love hath possessed him too!
My image never, never quits his mind.
Different from other men, his looks sincere
Tell me no woman fills his heart but me;
That, shunning pleasure, solitude he seeks
To think on me.

BERARDE.

[*Making a last effort, holding out her hand to the KING.*
I stake my head 'tis true!

THE KING (*taking off a ring and giving it to BERARDE*).
This for thy head.

BLANCHE.

Oh, how I wish, whene'er
I think of him by day, and dream by night,
He were beside me: I would tell him then,
Be happy; oh be mine, for thee —

[*The KING comes from behind the tree, and stretches out his arms towards her, going on his knee whilst she has her face turned from him. When she looks round again he speaks, finishing her speech.*

THE KING.

I love!

Say on; oh, cease not! say thou lov'st me, Blanche:
Love sounds so sweetly from a lip like thine.

BLANCHE (*frightened, looks round for DAME BERARDE, who has purposely disappeared*).

Oh! I'm betrayed, alone, and none to help!

THE KING.

Two happy lovers are themselves a world.

BLANCHE.

Whence come you, Sir?

THE KING.

From heaven or from hell,

'Tis of no import — angel, man, or fiend,

I love thee!

BLANCHE.

Heavens! if my father knew.

I hope none saw you enter! Leave me, Sir!

THE KING.

Leave thee, whilst trembling in my arms you rest,

And I am thine, and thou art all to me!

Thou lov'st me!

BLANCHE (*confused*).

Oh, you listened!

THE KING.

'Tis most true;

What sweeter music could I listen to?

BLANCHE (*supplicating*).

Well, if you love, leave me for love's own sake.

THE KING.

Leave thee, when now my fate is linked with thine!

Twin stars, in one horizon, *doubly bright*,¹

¹ Victor Hugo's lines run thus:—

“Quand notre double étoile au meme horizon brille!”

But as I cannot find that *double stars* were at all suspected in the days of Francis the First, I have taken the liberty to avoid the anachronism by a slight alteration of the text.

When heaven itself has chosen me to wake
 Within thy virgin breast the dawn of love,
 That soon shall blaze like noon! 'Tis the soul's sun;
 Dost thou not feel its soft and gentle flame?
 The monarch's crown, that death confers or takes,—
 The cruel glory of inhuman war;
 The hero's name the rich man's vast domains,—
 All these are transient, vain and earthly things.
 To this poor world, where all beside doth fade,
 But one pure joy remains,—'tis love! 'tis love!
 Dear Blanche, such happiness I bring to thee.
 Life is a flower, and love its nectared juice.
 'Tis like the eagle mated with the dove,—
 'Tis trembling innocence with strength allied,—
 'Tis like this little hand, thus lost in mine.
 Oh let us love! *[He embraces her, she resists.]*

BLANCHE.

No! leave me!

BERARDE (*aside, peeping out from the terrace*).
 All goes well!

She's snared!

THE KING.

Oh, tell me thou dost love!

BERARDE.

(*Aside.*) The Wretch!

THE KING.

Blanche, say it o'er again.

BLANCHE (*bending down her eyes*).
 You heard me once.

You know it.

THE KING.

Then I'm happy!

BLANCHE.

I'm undone!

THE KING.

No, blest with me!

BLANCHE.

Alas! I know you not!

Tell me your name.

BERARDE.

(*Aside.*) High time to think of that.

BLANCHE.

You are no nobleman, no courtier, sure;
My father fears them.

THE KING.

No, by heaven! — (*Aside.*) Let's see (*he deliberates*).
Godfrey Melune I'm called, a student poor,
So poor!

BERARDE (*who is just counting the money he has given her, holds up her hand*).
(*Aside.*) The liar!

[*Enter DE PIENNE and PARDAILLAN, they carry a dark lantern, and are concealed in cloaks.*

DE PIENNE (*to PARDAILLAN*).

Here 'tis, chevalier!

BERARDE (*runs down from the terrace*).
Voices outside I hear.

BLANCHE.

Oh, heaven! my father.

DAME BERARDE (*to the KING*).

Leave us! — away!

THE KING.

What traitor mars my bliss?

Would that my hands were grasping at his throat!

BLANCHE (*to BERARDE*).

Quick! quick! — Oh, save him! Ope the little gate
That leads towards the quay.

THE KING.

Leave thee so soon!

Wilt love to-morrow, Blanche?

BLANCHE.

And thou?

THE KING.

For ever!

BLANCHE.

Thou may'st deceive; for I've deceived my father.

THE KING.

Never! — One kiss on those bright eyes!

BLANCHE.

No! No!

[The KING, in spite of her resistance, seizes her in his arms, and kisses her several times.]

BERARDE.

A most infuriate lover, by my soul!

[Exit the KING with BERARDE.]

[BLANCHE remains for some time with her eyes fixed on the door through which the KING has passed; she then enters the house. Meanwhile the street is filled with Courtiers, armed and wearing mantles and masques. DE GORDES, DE COSSÉ, DE BRION, DE MONTMORENCY, DE MONTCHENÛ, and CLEMENT MAROT, join DE PIENNE and PARDAILLAN. The night is very dark — the lanthorns they carry are closed. They make signals of recognition, and point out TRIBOULET's house. A servant attends them bearing a scaling ladder.]

SCENE 5.—BLANCHE — *the* COURTIERS. *Afterwards*
TRIBOULET.

BLANCHE *comes out on the terrace; she holds a flambeau in her hand, which throws its light upon her countenance.*

BLANCHE.

Godfrey Melune! Oh, name that I adore,
Be graven on my heart!

DE PIENNE (*to the Courtiers*).
Messieurs, 'tis she!

DE GORDES.

Some bourgeois beauty; how I pity you,
Who cast your nets amongst the vulgar throng.

[*As he speaks, BLANCHE turns round, and the light falls full on her features.*

DE PIENNE.

What think you now?

MAROT.

I own the jade is fair.

DE GORDES.

An angel,—fairy,—an accomplished grace.

PARDAILLAN.

Is this the mistress of our Triboulet?
The rascal!

DE GORDES.

Scoundrel!

MAROT.

Beauty and the Beast!

'Tis just! Old Jupiter would cross the breed.

DE PIENNE.

Enough! we came to punish Triboulet;
We are all here, determined, well prepared,
With hatred armed,—aye, and a ladder too,—
Scale we the walls, and having seized the fair,
Convey her to the Louvre! Our good king
Shall greet the beauty at his morning's levée.

DE COSSÉ.

And straightway seize her, as most lawful prey.

MAROT.

Oh, leave the Devil and Fate to settle that.

DE GORDES.

'Tis a bright jewel, worthy of a crown.

[*Enter TRIBOULET absorbed in thought.*]

TRIBOULET.

Still I return,—and yet I know not why.

The old man cursed me!

[*In the dark he runs against DE GORDES.*]

Who goes there?

DE GORDES (*runs back to the conspirators, and whispers*).

Messieurs,

'Tis Triboulet!

DE COSSÉ.

Oh, double victory!

Let's slay the traitor!

DE PIENNE.

Nay, good Count,—not so:—

Pray, how, to-morrow, could we laugh at him?

DE GORDES.

Oh, if he's killed, the joke's not half so droll.

DE COSSÉ.

He'll spoil our plans.

MAROT.

No! leave you that to me,—

I'll manage all.

TRIBOULET (*aside*).

Some whispering I hear.

MAROT (*going up to TRIBOULET*).

What! Triboulet!

TRIBOULET (*fiercely*).

Who's there?

MAROT.

Don't eat me up!

'Tis I.

TRIBOULET.

What I?

MAROT.

Marot.

TRIBOULET.

The night's so dark.

MAROT.

Satan has made an inkstand of the sky.

TRIBOULET.

Why are you here?

MAROT.

We come (you surely guess):— (*he laughs*).

De Cossé's wife we aim at, for the king.

TRIBOULET.

Ah, excellent!

DE COSSÉ (*aside*).

Would I could break his bones!

TRIBOULET.

How would you enter,— not by open force?

MAROT (*to DE COSSÉ*).

Give me your key. (*DE COSSÉ passes him the key*).

(*To TRIBOULET*) This will ensure success.

Feel you De Cossé's arms engraved thereon?

TRIBOULET (*aside, feeling the key*).

Three leaves serrate: I know the scutcheon well,—

There stands his house. What silly fears were mine!

(*returning the key to MAROT.*)

If all you purpose be to steal the wife

Of fat De Cossé — faith, I'm with you too.

MAROT.

We are all masqued.

TRIBOULET.

Give me a mask as well.

[*MAROT puts on a mask, and ties it with a thick handkerchief, or bandage, covering both TRIBOULET's eyes and ears.*]

MAROT (*to TRIBOULET*).

You guard the ladder.

TRIBOULET.

Are there many here?

I can see nothing.

MAROT.

'Tis so dark a night (*to the Courtiers*).

Walk as you will, and talk without disguise,

The trusty bandage blinds and deafens him.

[*The Courtiers mount the ladder, burst open the door of the terrace, and enter the house. Soon afterwards one returns, and opens the door of the court-yard from within. Then the whole body rush out, bearing BLANCHE, half senseless. After they have left the stage, her voice is heard in the distance.*]

BLANCHE (*in the distance*).

Help! help me, father!

COURTIERS (*in the distance*)

Victory! she is ours!

TRIBOULET (*at the bottom of the ladder*)

How long must I stand doing penance here?

Will they ne'er finish? Soh! I'll wait no more.

[*He tears off the mask, and discovers the bandage.*

Hah! my eyes bandaged!

[*He tears off the mask and bandage. By the light of a lanthorn left behind, on the ground, he sees something white, which he takes up, and discovers to be his daughter's veil. He looks round — the ladder is against his own wall — the wall-door is open. He rushes into his house like a madman, and returns dragging out DAME BERARDE, half dressed and scarcely awake. He looks round in a state of bewilderment and stupor, tears his hair, and utters some inarticulate sounds of agony. At last his voice returns — he breaks forth into a cry of despair.*

Oh, the curse! — the curse!

[*He falls down in a swoon.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT THIRD: THE KING.

SCENE 1.— *Royal antichamber at the Louvre, furnished in the style of the Renaissance. Near the front of the stage, a table, chair, and footstool. At the back of the scene, a large door richly gilt. On the left, the door of the KING's sleeping apartment, covered with a tapestry hanging. On the right, a beaufet, with vessels of porcelain and gold. The door at the back opens on to a terrace with garden behind.*

THE COURTIER.

DE GORDES.

'Tis fit we plan the end of this adventure.

DE PIENNE.

Not so; let Triboulet still writhe and groan,
Ne'er dreaming that his love lies hidden here!

DE COSSÉ.

Aye, let him search the world. Yet, hold, my lords!
The palace guard our secret might betray.

DE MONTCHENÛ.

Throughout the Louvre all are ordered well;
They'll swear no woman came last night within.

PARDAILLAN.

Besides, to make the matter darker still,
A knave of mine, well versed in strategy,
Called at the poor fool's house and told he saw,
At dead of night, a struggling woman borne
To Hautefort's palace.

MAROT (*takes out a letter*).

This last night sent I:

(*He reads*). "Your mistress, Triboulet, I stole;
If her fair image dwells with thee,
Long may that image fill thy soul;
But her sweet self leaves France with me."

Signed with a flourish, John de Nivelles.

[*Courtiers all laugh vociferously.*]

PARDAILLAN.

Gods! what a chase!

DE COSSÉ.

His grief is joy to me.

DE GORDES.

Aye, let the slave, in agony and tears,
With clenching hands, and teeth that gnash with rage,
Pay in one day our long arrears of hate.

[*The door of the Royal apartment opens, and the KING enters dressed in a magnificent morning dress; he is accompanied by DE PIENNE; the Courtiers draw near. The KING and DE PIENNE laugh immoderately.*]

THE KING (*pointing to the distant door*).
She's there!

DE PIENNE (*laughing*).

The loved one of our Triboulet.

THE KING (*laughing*).

Steal my Fool's mistress! — Excellent, i'faith!

DE PIENNE.

Mistress or wife?

THE KING (*aside*).

A wife and daughter too!

So fond a fool I ne'er imagined him!

DE PIENNE.

Shall I produce her now?

THE KING.

Of course, Pardieu!

[DE PIENNE *leaves the room, and returns immediately, leading in BLANCHE, closely veiled and trembling. The KING sits down in his chair, in a careless attitude.*

DE PIENNE.

Enter, fair dame; then tremble as you will.
Behold the King!

BLANCHE (*still veiled*).

So young! — is that the King?
She throws herself at his feet. At the first sound of BLANCHE'S voice, the KING starts and then signs to the Courtiers to retire.

SCENE 2.— THE KING — BLANCHE.

The KING, when left alone with BLANCHE, takes the veil from her face.

THE KING.

Blanche!

BLANCHE.

Godfrey Melune! Oh Heav'n!

The KING (bursting into a fit of laughter).

Now, by my faith!

'Whether 'tis chance or planned, the gain is mine.
My Blanche! my beautiful, my heart's delight,
Come to my arms!

BLANCHE (*rising and shrinking back*).

The King! — forgive me, Sire;

Indeed, I know not what to say.— Good Sir,
Godfrey Melune; — but no! you are the King.

[*She falls on her knees again.*

Whoe'er thou art, alas! have mercy on me!

THE KING.

Mercy on thee! my Blanche, whom I adore!
Francis confirms the love that Godfrey gave.
I love, thou lovest, and we both are blest.
The name of King dims not the lover's flame.
You deemed me, once, a scholar, clerk,
Lowly in rank, in all but learning poor;
And now that chance hath made me nobler born,
And crowned me King, is that sufficient cause
To hold me suddenly in such abhorrence?—
I've not the luck to be a serf — what then?

[*The KING laughs heartily.*

BLANCHE (*aside*).

Oh, how he laughs! — and I with shame could die!

THE KING.

What fêtes, what sports and pageants, shall be ours!
What whispered love in garden and in grove!
A thousand pleasures that the night conceals!
Thy happy future grafted on mine own —
We'll be two lovers wedded in delight.
Age must steal on, and what is human life?
A paltry stuff, of mingled toil and care,
Which love with starry light doth spangle o'er;
Without it, trust me, 'tis a sorry rag —
Blanche, 'tis a theme I've oft reflected on,
And this is wisdom:—honour Heaven above,
Eat, drink, be merry, crowning all with love!

BLANCHE (*confounded and shuddering*).

Oh, how unlike the picture fancy drew!

THE KING.

What did you think me, then, a solemn fool,
A trembling lover, spiritless and tame,
Who thinks all women ready to expire
With melting sympathy, because he sighs
And wears a sad and melancholy face?

BLANCHE.

Oh, leave me! — (*Aside.*) Wretched girl!

THE KING.

Know'st who I am? —

Why, France — a nation — fifteen million souls —

Gold, honour, pleasures, power uncurbed by law,

All, all are mine: — I reign and rule o'er all.

I am *their* sovereign, Blanche, but thou art *mine* —

I am their *King*, Blanche, wilt not be my *Queen*?

BLANCHE.

The Queen! Your wife!

THE KING (*laughing heartily*).

No! virtuous innocence;

The Queen, my mistress: 'tis the fairer name.

BLANCHE.

Thy mistress! Shame upon thee!

THE KING.

Hah! so proud?

BLANCHE (*indignantly*).

I'll ne'er be such! My father can protect me!

THE KING.

My poor Buffoon! my Fool! my Triboulet!

Thy father's mine! — my property! my slave!

His will's mine own!

BLANCHE (*weeping*).

Is he, too, yours?

[*She sobs out.*]

THE KING (*falling on his knees*).

Dear Blanche! too dear to me!

Oh, weep not thus! but, pressed against my heart —

[*He endeavours to embrace her.*]

BLANCHE.

Forbear!

THE KING.

Say but again, thou lov'st me, Blanche!

BLANCHE.

No! no! — 'tis passed.

THE KING.

I've pained thee thoughtlessly.

Nay, do not sob! Rather than force from thee
Whose precious drops, my Blanche, I'd die with shame,
Or pass before my kingdom and my court
For one unknown to gallantry and fame.
A King,— and make a woman weep! Ye gods!

BLANCHE.

'Tis all a cheat! I know you jest with me!
If you be King, let me be taken home.
My father weeps for me. I live hard by
De Cossé's palace; but you know it well.
Alas! who are you? I'm bewildered! — lost!
Dragg'd like a victim here 'midst cries of joy;
My brain whirls round. 'Tis but a frightful dream!
You, that I thought so kind. (*Weeping*). Alas! I think
I love you not! (*suddenly starting back*).

I do but fear you now!

THE KING (*trying to take her in his arms*).

You fear me, Blanche!

BLANCHE (*resisting*).

Have pity!

THE KING (*seizing her in his arms*).

Well, at least

One pardoning kiss!

BLANCHE (*struggling*).

No! no!

THE KING (*laughing*).

(*Aside*). How strange a girl!

BLANCHE (*forces herself away*).

Help! Ah! that door!

[*She sees the door of the KING's own room, rushes in, and closes it violently.*]

THE KING (*taking out a little key from his girdle*).

'Tis lucky I've the key!

[*He opens the door, rushes in, and locks it behind him.*]

MAROT (*who has been watching for some time at the door at the back of the stage*).

She flies for safety to the King's own chamber!

Alas! poor lamb! (*He calls to DE GORDES, who is outside*).

Hey, count!

DE GORDES (*peeping in*).

May we return?

SCENE 3.—MAROT — THE COURTIER — TRIBOULET.

All the Courtiers come in except DE PIENNE, who remains watching at the door.

MAROT (*pointing to the door*).

The sheep seeks refuge in the lion's den!

PARDAILLAN (*overjoyed*).

Oh ho! poor Triboulet!

DE PIENNE (*entering*).

Hush! hush! he comes!

Be all forewarned; assume a careless air.

MAROT.

To none but me he spoke, nor can he guess.

At any here.

PARDAILLAN.

Yet might a look betray.

[*Enter TRIBOULET. His appearance is unaltered. He has the usual dress and thoughtless deportment of the Jester, only he is very pale.*

[*DE PIENNE appears to be engaged in conversation, but is privately making signs and gestures to some of the young nobles, who can scarcely repress their laughter.*

TRIBOULET (*advancing slowly to the front of the stage*).

They all have done this! guilt is in their looks:—

Yet where concealed her?—It were vain to ask—

But to be scoffed at!

[*He goes up to MAROT with a gay and smiling air.*

Ah, I'm so rejoiced

To see you took no cold last night, Marot.

MAROT.

Last night!

TRIBOULET (*affecting to treat it as a jest*).

The trick, I own, was neatly played.

MAROT.

The trick!

TRIBOULET.

Aye! well-contrived!

MAROT.

Why, man, last night,

When curfew tolled, ensconced between the sheets

I slept so soundly, that the sun was high

This morn when I awoke.

TRIBOULET (*affecting to believe*).

I must have dreamed.

[*TRIBOULET sees a white handkerchief upon the table, and darts upon it; he examines the initials.*

PARDAILLAN (*to DE PIENNE*).

See, Duke, how he devours my handkerchief!

TRIBOULET (*with a sigh*).

Not hers!

DE PIENNE (*to the young Courtiers, who cannot control their laughter*).

Nay, gentlemen, what stirs your mirth?

DE GORDES (*pointing to MAROT*).

'Tis he, by Jupiter!

TRIBOULET.

They're strangely moved.

Sleeps the King yet, my lord? (*advancing to DE PIENNE.*)

DE PIENNE.

He doth, good Fool.

TRIBOULET.

Methinks I hear some stir within his room.

[*He attempts to approach the door.*]

DE PIENNE (*preventing him*).

You'll wake his Majesty!

DE GORDES (*to PARDAILLAN*).

Viscount, hear this:—

Marot (the rascal) tells a pleasant tale,
How the three Guys, returning Heaven knows whence,
Found each, last night,—what sayest thou, Buffoon?—
His loving wife with a gallant!

MAROT.

Concealed!

TRIBOULET.

Ah, 'tis a wicked world in which we live!

DE COSSÉ.

Woman's so treacherous!

TRIBOULET.

My Lord, take heed!

DE COSSÉ.

Of what?

TRIBOULET.

Beware! the case may be your own;
Just such a pleasant tale of you they tell;
E'en now there's something peeps above your ears.
[Makes a sign of horns.]

DE COSSÉ (*in a fury*).

Hah!

TRIBOULET (*speaking to the Courtiers, and pointing to DE COSSÉ*).

'Tis indeed an animal most rare;
When 'tis provoked, how strangely wild its cry!
Hah! (*mimicking DE COSSÉ*).

*[The Courtiers laugh at DE COSSÉ.
Enter a Gentleman bearing the Queen's livery.]*

DE PIENNE.

Vandragon! what now?

GENTLEMAN.

Her Majesty
Would see the King, on matters of import.
[DE PIENNE makes signs that it is impossible.]

GENTLEMAN.

Madame de Brezé is not with him now!

DE PIENNE (*angrily*).

The King still sleeps!

GENTLEMAN.

How, Duke! — a moment past

You were together!

DE PIENNE (*makes signs to the Gentleman, who will not understand him, and which TRIBOULET observes with breathless attention*).

He has joined the chase.

GENTLEMAN.

Indeed! without a horse or huntsman, then,
For all his equipages wait him here.

DE PIENNE.

Confusion! (*Then in a rage to the messenger*)

Now, Sir, will you understand?

The King sees nobody to-day.

TRIBOULET (*in a voice of thunder*).

She's here!

She's with the King! (*The Courtiers are alarmed.*)

DE GORDES.

What she? — I'faith he raves.

TRIBOULET.

Ah, gentlemen, well know you what I mean;
Nor shall you fright me from my purpose now.
She, whom last night you ravished from my home —
Base cowards all! — Montmorency, Brion,
De Pienne, and Satan (for with fiends you're leagued),
She's here, — She's mine!

DE PIENNE.

What then, my Triboulet?

You've lost a mistress! Such a form as thine
Will soon find others.

TRIBOULET (*in a loud voice*).

Give me back my child!

COURTIER (*appalled*).

His child!

TRIBOULET.

My daughter! Do you taunt me now?
Why, wolves and courtiers have their offspring too,
And why not I? Enough of this, my lords;
If 'twere a jest, 'tis ended now! You laugh,—

You whisper! Villains! 'twas a heartless deed.
I'll tear her from you. Give me back my child!
She's there!

[He rushes to the door of the KING's room. All the Courtiers interpose and prevent him.]

MAROT.

His folly has to madness turned.

TRIBOULET.

Base courtiers! demons! fawning race accurst!
A maiden's honour is to you as nought —
A king's fit prey — a profligate's debauch.
Your wives and daughters (if they chance to please),
Belong to him. The virgin's sacred name
Is deemed a treasure, burthensome to bear:
A woman's but a field — a yielding farm
Let out to royalty. The rent it brings,
A government, a title, ribbon, star!
Not one amongst ye give me back the lie.
'Tis true, base robbers! you would sell him all!

(to DE GORDES) — Your sister, sir!

(to PARDAILLAN) — Your mother!

(to DE BRION) — You! — Your wife!

Who shall believe it? — Nobles, dukes, and peers;
A Vermandois from Charlemagne who springs;
A Brion from Milan's illustrious duke;
A Gordes Simiane; a Pienne; a Pardaillan;
And you, Montmorency! What names are these
Who basely steal away a poor man's child?
O never from such a high and ancient race,
Such blazons proud, sprung dastards such as ye,
But from some favoured lacquey's stolen embrace:
You're bastards all!

DE GORDES.

Bravo, Buffoon!

TRIBOULET.

How much

Has the King given for this honoured service?

You're paid,— I know it.

[*Tears his hair.*]

I, who had but her,—

What can the King for me! He cannot give

A name like yours, to hide me from mine own:

Nor shape my limbs, nor make my looks more smooth.

Hell! — he has taken all! I'll ne'er go hence

Till she's restored! Look at this trembling hand,—

'Tis but a serf's; no blood illustrious there;—

Unarmed you think, because no sword it bears,—

But with my nails I'll tear her from ye all!

[*He rushes again at the door — all the Courtiers close upon him; he struggles desperately for some time, but at length, exhausted, he falls on his knees at the front of the stage.*]

All! all combined against me! ten to one!

(turning to MAROT).

Behold these tears, Marot! — Be merciful;

Thine is a soul inspired. Oh, have a heart!

Tell me she's here! Ours is a common cause,

For thou alone, amidst this lordly throng,

Hast wit and sense. Marot! — Oh, good Marot!

(turns to the Courtiers).

Even at your feet, my Lords, I sue for grace;

I'm sick at heart; alas, be merciful!

Some other day I'll bear your humours better;

For many a year, your poor mis-shaped Buffoon

Has made you sport — aye, when his heart would break.

Forgive your Triboulet, nor vent your spleen

On one so helpless; give me back my child —

My only treasure — all that I possess!

Without her, nothing in this world is mine.

Be kind to me! another night like this

Would sear my brain, and whiten o'er my hair.

[*The door of the KING's room opens, and BLANCHE, agitated and disordered, rushes out, and, with a cry of terror, throws herself into her father's arms.*

BLANCHE.

My father, ah! (*She buries her head in her father's bosom.*)

TRIBOULET.

My Blanche! my darling child!

Look ye, good Sirs, the last of all my race.

Dear angel!—Gentlemen, you'll bear with me—

You'll pardon, I am sure, these tears of joy.

A child like this, whose gentle innocence

Even to look on makes the heart more pure,

Could not be lost, you'll own, without a pang.

(*to BLANCHE.*)

Fear nothing now; 'twas but a thoughtless jest,

Something to laugh at.—How they frightened thee!

Confess it, Blanche. [*Embraces her fondly.*

But I'm so happy now,

My heart's so full, I never knew before

How much I loved. I laugh, that once did weep

To lose thee; yet to hold thee thus again,

Is surely bliss.—But thou dost weep, my child?

BLANCHE (*covering her face with her hand*).

Oh, hide me from my shame!

TRIBOULET (*starting*).

What mean'st thou, Blanche?

BLANCHE (*pointing to the Courtiers*).

Not before these; I'd blush and speak, alone.

TRIBOULET (*turns in an agony to the KING's door*).

Monster!—She too!

BLANCHE (*sobbing and falling at his feet*).

Alone with thee, my father!

TRIBOULET (*striding towards the Courtiers*).
Go, get ye hence! And if the King pretend
To turn his steps this way,
(*to VERMANDOIS*) You're of his guard!
Tell him he dare not! — Triboulet is here!

DE PIENNE.
Of all the fools, no fool e'er equalled this.

DE GORDES.
To fools and children sometimes must we yield,
Yet will we watch without.

[*Exeunt all the Courtiers but DE COSSÉ.*]

TRIBOULET.
Speak freely to me, Blanche. (*He turns and sees DE COSSÉ.*
(*In a voice of thunder*). You heard me, Sir?

DE COSSÉ (*retiring precipitately*).
These fools permit themselves strange liberties.

SCENE 4.— TRIBOULET — BLANCHE.

TRIBOULET (*gravely and sternly*).
Now, speak!

BLANCHE (*with downcast eyes, interrupted by sobs*).
Dear father, 'twas but yesternight
He stole within the gate — (*She hides her face*).
I cannot speak.

[TRIBOULET *presses her in his arms, and kisses her
forehead tenderly.*]
But long ago, (I should have told you then,)
He followed me, yet spoke not, and at church,
As sure as Sunday came, this gentleman —

TRIBOULET (*fiercely*).
The King!

BLANCHE.

—— Passed close to me, and, as I think,
Disturbed my chair, that I might look on him.
Last night he gained admittance.

TRIBOULET.

Stop, my child;

I'll spare thy shame the pang of telling it;
I guess the rest. (*He stands erect.*)

Oh, sorrow, most complete!

His loathsome touch has withered on thy brow
The virgin wreath of purity it wore,
And in its stead has left the brand of shame!
The once pure air that did environ thee
His breath has sullied. Oh, my Blanche! my child!
Once the sole refuge of my misery,
The day that woke me from a night of woe,
The soul through which mine own had hopes of Heaven,
A veil of radiance, covering my disgrace,
The haven still for one by all accurst,
An angel left by God to bless my tears,
The only sainted thing I e'er did trust!
What am I now? Amidst this hollow court,
Where vice, and infamy, and foul debauch,
With riot wild, and bold effrontery, reign;
These eyes, aweary with the sight of crime,
Turned to thy guileless soul to find repose;
Then could I bear my fate, my abject fate,
My tears, the pride that swelled my bursting heart,
The witty sneers that sharpened on my woes —
Yes, all the pangs of sorrow and of shame
I could endure, but not thy wrongs, my child!
Aye, hide thy face and weep; at thy young age
Some part of anguish may escape in tears;
Pour what thou can'st into a father's heart.

(Abstractedly.)

But now, enough. The matter once despatched,
We leave this city,—aye, if I escape!

[*Turning with redoubled rage to the KING's chamber.*
Francis the First! May God, who hears my prayer,
Dig in thy path a bloody sepulchre,
And hurl thee down, unshrived, and gorged with sin!

BLANCHE (*aside*).
Grant it not, Heaven! for I love him still.

DE PIENNE (*speaking outside*).
De Montchenu, guard hence to the Bastile
Monsieur St. Vallier, now your prisoner.

Enter ST. VALLIER, MONTCHENU, and Soldiers.

ST. VALLIER.
Since neither Heaven doth strike, nor pitying man
Hath answered to my curse on this proud King,
Steeped to the lip in crime,—why, then 'tis sure
The monarch prospers, and my curse is vain.

TRIBOULET (*turning round, and confronting him*).
Old man, 'tis false! There's *one* shall strike for thee!

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT FOURTH: BLANCHE

SCENE 1.— *The scene represents the Place de la Grève, near la Tournelle, an ancient gate of the City of Paris. On the right is a miserable hovel, which purports, by a rude sign, to be house of entertainment, or auberge of the lowest description. The front of the house is towards the spectators, and is so arranged, that the inside is easily seen. The lower room is wretchedly furnished. There is a table, a large chimney, and a narrow staircase leading to a sort of loft or garret above, containing a truckle bed, easily seen through the window. The side of the building to the left of the actor has a door which opens inwards. The wall is dilapidated, and so full of chinks and apertures, that what is passing in the house may be witnessed by an observer outside. The remainder of the stage represents the Grève. On the left is an old ruined wall and parapet, at the foot of which runs the river Seine. In the distance beyond the river is seen the old City of Paris.*

TRIBOULET — BLANCHE outside — SALTABADIL inside the house.

[*During the whole of this scene, TRIBOULET has the appearance of one anxious and fearful of surprise. SALTABADIL sits in the Auberge, near the table, engaged in cleaning his belt, and not hearing what is passing without.*

TRIBOULET.

Thou lov'st him still?

BLANCHE.

For ever!

TRIBOULET.

Yet I gave

Full time to cure thee of this senseless dream.

BLANCHE.

Indeed, I love him.

TRIBOULET.

Ah, 'tis woman's heart!

But, Blanche, explain thy reasons — why dost love?

BLANCHE.

I know not.

TRIBOULET.

'Tis most strange! — incredible!

BLANCHE.

Not so! — It may be 'tis for that I love —

Say that a man doth risk his life for ours,

Or husband bring us riches, rank and fame,

Do women *therefore* love? — In truth, I know,

All he hath brought me are but wrongs and shame,

And yet I love him, tho' I know not why.

Whate'er is linked with him ne'er quits my mind.

'Tis madness, father! Can'st thou pardon still?

Though he hath wronged, and thou art ever kind,

For him I'd die as surely as for thee.

TRIBOULET.

I do forgive thee.

BLANCHE.

Then he loves me too.

TRIBOULET.

Insensate! — No!

BLANCHE.

He pledged his faith to me,

And with a solemn oath confirmed his vows,
Such loving things! — with such resistless grace
He speaks, no woman's heart his truth can doubt.
His words, his looks, so eloquent, so kind,
'Tis a true King, a handsome, and a brave!

TRIBOULET.

'Tis a cold, perjured, and relentless fiend!
Yet 'scapes he not my vengeance.

BLANCHE.

Dearest father,

You once forgave him.

TRIBOULET.

Till the snare was spread
For his dark villainy, I dared not strike.

BLANCHE.

'Tis now a month — (I tremble as I speak) —
You seemed to love the King.

TRIBOULET.

'Twas but pretence;
Thou shalt have vengeance!

BLANCHE.

Father, spare your child!

TRIBOULET.

Thy senseless passion might be turned to hate,
If he deceived thee.

BLANCHE.

He! I'll ne'er believe it!

TRIBOULET.

What if those eyes, that plead his cause with tears,
Beheld his perfidy — would'st love him still?

BLANCHE.

I cannot tell. He loves me! nay, adores.
'Twas but last night ——

TRIBOULET (*interrupting her, sneeringly*).
What time?

BLANCHE.

About this hour.

TRIBOULET.

Then witness here, and, if thou can'st, forgive!

[*He draws her to the house, and directs her gaze through one of the apertures in the wall, where all that passes within may be seen.*

BLANCHE.

Nought but a man I see.

TRIBOULET.

Look now!

[*The KING, dressed as an Officer, appears from a door which communicates with an apartment within.*

BLANCHE (*starting*).

Oh, father!

[*During the following scene, BLANCHE remains, fixed as a statue, against the fissure in the wall, observing what is passing within, inattentive to all else, and only agitated from time to time with a convulsive shudder.*

SCENE 2.—BLANCHE — TRIBOULET *outside* — SALTABADIL — THE KING — MAGUELONNE *inside*.

THE KING (*striking SALTABADIL familiarly on the shoulder*).
Two things at once — your sister and a glass!

TRIBOULET (*aside*).

The morals of a King by grace divine;
Who risks his life in low debaucheries,

And doth prefer the wine that damns his sense,
If proffered by some tavern Hebe's hand!

THE KING (*sings*).

"Changeful woman, constant never,
He's a fool who trusts her ever,
For her love the wind doth blow,
Like a feather, to and fro."¹

[SALTABADIL *goes sullenly to the next room, returning with a bottle and glass, which he places on the table. He then strikes twice on the floor with the handle of his long sword, and at this signal a young girl, dressed in the Gipsy dress, bounds quickly down the stair. As she enters, the KING tries to seize her in his arms, but she slips away. SALTABADIL recommences cleaning his belt.*

THE KING (*to SALTABADIL*).

My friend, thy buckle would be brighter far
Cleaned in the open air.

SALTABADIL (*sullenly*).

I understand.

[*He rises, salutes the KING awkwardly, opens the door and comes out. He sees TRIBOULET, and comes cautiously towards him. BLANCHE sees nothing but the young Gipsy girl, who is dancing round the KING.*

SALTABADIL (*in a low voice to TRIBOULET*).

Shall he die now?

TRIBOULET.

Not yet! — return anon.

[TRIBOULET *makes signs to him to retire. SALTABADIL disappears behind the parapet wall. Meantime the KING endeavours to caress the young Gipsy.*

¹ The reader's attention is requested to these verses. They are made the means of producing, in the Fifth Act, a most startling dramatic effect.

MAGUELONNE (*slipping away*).

No, No!

THE KING.

Thou offerest too much defence.

A truce! Come hither! (*The girl draws nearer*).

'Tis a week ago,

At Triancourt's Hotel, (Ah, let me see,
Who took me there? — I think 'twas Triboulet,)
There first I gazed upon that beauteous face.
'Tis just a week, my goddess, that I love thee,
And thee alone.

MAGUELONNE.

And twenty more besides;

To me, a most accomplished rake you seem.

THE KING.

Well, well! I own some hearts have ached for me.
True, I'm a monster!

MAGUELONNE.

Coxcomb!

THE KING.

'Tis most true!

But, tempter, 'twas your beauty lured me here,
With most adventurous patience to endure
A dinner of the vilest; — and such wine!
Your brother's hang-dog looks have soured it:
An ugly wretch! How dares he shew his face
So near those witching eyes and lips of bliss!
It matters not. I stir not hence to-night.

MAGUELONNE (*aside*).

He courts the snare! (*to the KING, who tries to embrace her*).
Excuse me!

THE KING.

Why resist?

MAGUELONNE.

Be wise!

THE KING.

Why this is wisdom, Maguelonne,
Eat, drink, and love; I hold exactly there
With old King Solomon.

MAGUELONNE (*laughing*).

Ha! ha! I think

Thou lov'st the tavern better than the church.

THE KING (*stretching out his arms to catch her*).
Dear Maguelonne!

MAGUELONNE (*runs round behind the table*).

To-morrow!

THE KING (*seizing the table with both hands*).

Say again

That odious word, thy fence I'll overthrow;
The lip of beauty ne'er should say to-morrow.

MAGUELONNE (*comes suddenly round and sits by the*
KING).

Well, let's be friends!

THE KING (*taking her hand*).

Ah, what a hand is thine!

So soft, so taper!—'twere a Christian's part,
Without pretence to over sanctity,
To court thy blow, and turn his check for more.

MAGUELONNE (*pleased*).

You mock me.

THE KING.

Never!

MAGUELONNE.

But I am not fair.

THE KING.

Unkind to me, and to thyself unjust!
Queen of inexorables, know'st thou not
How tyrant love doth rule the soldier's heart?
"And if bright beauty doth our suit approve,
Though 'twere 'midst Russia's snows, we blaze with love."

MAGUELONNE (*bursting into a fit of laughter*).
I'm sure you've read that somewhere in a book.

THE KING (*aside*).

Quite possible! (*Aloud.*) Come, kiss me!

MAGUELONNE.

Sir, you're drunk!

THE KING.

With love!

MAGUELONNE.

I know you do but jest with me,
And couch your wit against a silly girl.

[*The KING succeeds in giving her a kiss, and tries a second time, which she refuses.*

Enough!

THE KING.

I'll marry thee.

MAGUELONNE (*laughing*).

You pledge your word.

[*The KING clasps her round the waist, and whispers in her ear. BLANCHE, unable to bear the scene any longer, turns round, and totters towards her father.*

TRIBOULET (*after contemplating her for some time in silence*).

What think'st thou now of vengeance, my poor child?

BLANCHE.

Betrayed! ungrateful! — Oh, my heart will break!

He hath no soul, no pity, kindness — none!
Even to that girl, who loves him not, he says
The same fond words that once he said to me.

[*Hides her head in her father's bosom.*]

And oh, that shameless creature!

TRIBOULET.

Hush! no more!

Enough of tears, leave now revenge to me!

BLANCHE.

Do as thou wilt.

TRIBOULET.

I thank thee.

BLANCHE.

Yet, alas!

Father, I tremble when I read thy looks.
What would'st thou do?

TRIBOULET.

I pray thee, ask me not!

All is prepared! — Now to our house, my child;
There quick disguise thee as a cavalier,
Mount a swift steed, and store thy purse with gold; —
Hie thee to Evreux, stop not on the road,
And by to-morrow's eve I'll join thee there.
Beneath thy mother's portrait stands a chest —
Thou know'st it well — the dress lies ready there.
The horse stands saddled. Do as I have said,
But come not here again; for here shall pass
A deed most terrible. Go now, dear Blanche!

BLANCHE.

You'll surely come with me?

TRIBOULET.

Impossible!

BLANCHE (*aside*).

My heart feels sick and faint.

TRIBOULET.

Now, fare thee well!

Remember, Blanche, do all as I have said!

[*Exit* BLANCHE.

[*During this scene, the KING and MAGUELONNE continue laughing, and talking in a low voice. As soon as BLANCHE is gone, TRIBOULET goes to the parapet and makes a sign for SALTABADIL who appears from behind the wall. Night draws on; the stage becomes darker.*

SCENE 3.—TRIBOULET — SALTABADIL *outside*:—THE KING — MAGUELONNE (*inside the house*).

TRIBOULET (*counting out the gold to SALTABADIL*).

You ask for twenty,—here are ten in hand.

Art sure he stays the night?

[*He stops in the act of giving him the money.*

SALTABADIL (*goes to examine the appearance of the night*).

The storm comes on.

In one short hour, the tempest and the rain

Shall aid my sister to detain him here.

TRIBOULET.

At midnight I return.

SALTABADIL.

No need of that.

Thank Heaven, I've strength enough, unhelped, to throw
A corpse into the Seine.

TRIBOULET.

That triumph's mine.

These hands alone shall do it.

SALTABADIL.

As for that,
Even as you please; 'tis no affair of mine.
I balk no fancies. In a sack concealed,
Your man shall be delivered you to-night.

TRIBOULET (*gives him the gold*).

'Tis well! — At midnight, and the rest are thine.

SALTABADIL.

It shall be done! How call you this gallant?

TRIBOULET.

Would'st know his name? — Then hear mine own as well.
For *mine* is chastisement, and *his* is crime!

[*Exit TRIBOULET.*

SCENE 4.— SALTABADIL — THE KING — MAGUELONNE.

[SALTABADIL, alone outside, examines the appearance of the sky, which is becoming gradually more overcast. It is almost night. The lightning flashes, and thunder is heard in the distance.

SALTABADIL.

The storm o'erhangs the city,—aye, that's well.
This place will soon be lonely as the grave.
'Tis a strange business this, and, by my head!
I cannot fathom it. These people seem
Possessed with something that I can't divine.

[*He examines the sky again. During this time the KING is laughing with MAGUELONNE. He endeavours to embrace her.*

MAGUELONNE (*repulsing him*).

My brother's coming!

THE KING.

Sweetest one, what then?

SALTABADIL *enters, closing the door after him.* A loud
peal of thunder.

MAGUELONNE.

Hark, how it thunders!

SALTABADIL.

Listen to the rain.

THE KING.

Well, let it rain! 'tis our good pleasure here
To stop this night. [*Slapping SALTABADIL on the shoulder.*]

MAGUELONNE (*laughing at him*).

'Tis our good pleasure! Well!

This is a King indeed! Your family
May be alarmed.

[SALTABADIL *makes signs to her not to prevent him.*]

THE KING.

Nor wife nor child have I.

I care for none.

SALTABADIL (*aside*).

There's Providence in that.

[*The rain falls heavily. The night becomes quite dark.*]

THE KING.

Thou, fellow, may'st go sleep, e'en where thou wilt.

SALTABADIL (*bowing*).

Most happy.

MAGUELONNE (*in an earnest whisper, while lighting the
lamp*).

Get thee hence!

THE KING (*laughs and speaks aloud*).

In such a night!

I'd scarcely turn a poet out of doors.

SALTABADIL (*aside to MAGUELONNE, showing the gold*).
Let him remain. I've ten good crowns of gold —
As much more when 'tis done!

(*To the KING*) Most proud am I
To offer my poor chamber for the night.

THE KING.

Beshrew me now, 'tis some infernal den,
Where summer bakes one, and December's snows
Freeze every vein.

SALTABADIL.

I'll show it, with your leave.

THE KING.

Lead on!

[SALTABADIL takes the lamp; the KING goes to MAGUELONNE, and whispers something in her ear. Then both mount the narrow staircase, SALTABADIL preceding the KING.

MAGUELONNE (*she looks out at the window*).

Ah, poor young man!

How dark without.

[The KING and SALTABADIL are seen through the window of the room above.

SALTABADIL (*to the KING*).

Here is a bed, a table, and a chair!

THE KING (*measuring them*).

Three, six, nine feet in all. Thy furniture
Hath surely fought at Marignan, my friend,
'Tis chopped, and cut, and hacked so wondrous small.

[He examines the window, in which there is no glass.

How healthy 'tis to sleep i' the open air:
No glass — no curtains! sure the gentle breeze
Was ne'er more courteously received than here.
Good night, good fellow!

SALTABADIL (*descending the stairs*).

Heaven preserve you, sir!

THE KING.

In truth, I'm weary, and would sleep awhile.—

[*He places his hat and sword on the chair, takes off his boots, and throws himself on the bed.*]

'Tis a sweet girl! — that Maguelonne, so gay,
So fresh, so young. I trust the door's unbarred.

[*He gets up and tries the lock.*]

Ah, 'tis all right!

[*Throws himself again on the bed, and is soon fast asleep.*]

[MAGUELONNE and SALTABADIL are sitting down below. The tempest rages. Thunder, lightning, and rain incessant. MAGUELONNE sits with some needle-work. SALTABADIL, with a nonchalant air, is emptying the bottle of wine the KING has left. Both seem lost in thought.]

MAGUELONNE (*after a pause of some duration*).

Methinks this Cavalier

Most prepossessing!

SALTABADIL.

Faith, I think so, too —

He fills my purse with twenty crowns of gold!

MAGUELONNE.

How many?

SALTABADIL.

Twenty.

MAGUELONNE.

Oh, he's worth much more!

SALTABADIL.

Go up, pert doll! and if his sleep be sound,
Bring down his sword!

[MAGUELONNE obeys. The storm rages violently. At this moment BLANCHE enters from the back of the

stage, dressed as a man, in a black riding habit, boots and spurs.—She advances slowly to the crevice in the wall. Meanwhile SALTABADIL continues to drink; and MAGUELONNE, with a lamp in her hand, bends over the sleeping KING.

MAGUELONNE.

He sleeps. Alas! poor youth.

[*She brings down his sword to SALTABADIL.*

SCENE 5.—THE KING *asleep in the upper room.* SALTABADIL and MAGUELONNE *in the room below.* BLANCHE *outside.*

BLANCHE (*walking slowly in the dark, guided by the flashes of lightning. Thunder incessant*).

A deed most terrible!! Is reason fled?

There's something more than nature buoys me up:—

Even in this dreadful house he stops to-night!

Oh, pardon, Father, pardon my return—

My disobedience! I could bear no more

The agony of doubt that racked my soul—

I, who have lived, till now, unknowing all

The tears and sorrows of this cruel world

Midst peace and flowers!—now am hurled at once

From happy innocence to guilt and shame!

Love tramples on the ruined edifice

Of virtue's temple, that his torch has seared!

His fire's extinct—the ashes but remain:—

He loves me not! Was that the thunder's voice?

It wakes me from my thoughts! Oh, fearful night!

Despair has nerved my heart—my woman's heart

That once feared shadows!

[*She sees the light in the upper window.*

Ah, what is't they do?

How my heart throbs! They would not slay him, sure?

[*Noise of thunder and rain.*

SALTABADIL (*within*).

Heaven growls above as though 'twere married strife —
One curses,— t' other drowns the earth with tears.

BLANCHE.

Oh, if my father knew his child were here!

MAGUELONNE (*within*).

Brother!

BLANCHE (*startled*).

Who spoke?

MAGUELONNE (*louder*).

Why, brother?

SALTABADIL.

Well, what now?

MAGUELONNE.

Thou canst not read my thoughts?

SALTABADIL.

Not I!

MAGUELONNE.

But guess!

SALTABADIL.

The fiend confound thee!

MAGUELONNE.

Come! this fine young man —

So tall! so handsome! — who lies wrapped in sleep

As thoughtless and as trusting as a child! —

We'll spare his life!

BLANCHE.

Oh, heaven!

SALTABADIL.

Take thou this sack,

And sew these broken seams.

MAGUELONNE.

What would you do?

SALTABADIL.

E'en place therein thy handsome, tall gallant,
When my keen blade hath dealt with him above,
And sink his carcase, garnished with yon stone,
Deep in the river's bed.

MAGUELONNE.

But —

SALTABADIL.

Silence, girl!

Urge me no more.

MAGUELONNE.

Yet —

SALTABADIL.

Wilt thou hold thy peace?

Wert thou consulted, no one would be slain.
On with thy work.

BLANCHE.

What dreadful pair are these!

Is it on hell I gaze?

MAGUELONNE.

Well, I obey:

But you must hear me.

SALTABADIL.

Umph!

MAGUELONNE.

You do not hate

This gentleman.

SALTABADIL.

Not I. I love the man

That bears a sword. 'Tis by the sword I live.

MAGUELONNE.

Why stab a handsome youth, to please, forsooth,
An ugly hunchback, crooked as an S!

SALTABADIL.

'Hark ye awhile, the simple case I'll state.
A hunchback gives, to slay a handsome man —
I care not whom,— ten golden crowns in hand,
And ten besides, whene'er the deed is done.
Of course — he dies!

MAGUELONNE.

Why not the old man slay
When he returns to pay thee o'er the gold?
'Twere all the same.

BLANCHE.

My father!

SALTABADIL (*with indignation*).

Hark ye now:—
I'll hear no more of this. Am I a thief,—
A bandit, cut-throat, cheat? Would'st have me rob
The client who employs and pays my sword?

MAGUELONNE.

Couldst thou not place this log within the sack?
The night's so dark, the cheat he could not tell.

SALTABADIL.

Ha! ha! Thy trick would scarce deceive the blind.
There's something in the clammy touch of death
That baffles imitation.

MAGUELONNE.

Spare his life!

SALTABADIL.

I say — he dies!

MAGUELONNE.

I'll scare him from his sleep:—

Save and protect him hence.

BLANCHE.

Good, generous girl!

SALTABADIL.

My twenty crowns!

MAGUELONNE.

'Tis true!

SALTABADIL.

Hear reason, then:

He must not live.

MAGUELONNE.

I say he shall not die!

[*She places herself in a determined attitude at the foot of the stairs; SALTABADIL, fearing to wake the KING, stops in his purpose, apparently thinking how to compromise the affair.*

SALTABADIL.

Hear me:—At midnight comes my patron back;
If any stranger chance to pass this way,
And claim our shelter, ere the bell shall toll,
I'll strike him dead,—and offer, in exchange,
His mangled body for thy puppet yonder.
So that the corse he throws into the Seine,
He cannot guess the change. But this is all
That I can do for thee.

MAGUELONNE.

Gramercy, brother,—

In the fiend's name, who'er can pass this way?

SALTABADIL.

Nought else can save his life!

MAGUELONNE.

At such an hour!

BLANCHE.

Oh God! thou temptest me! Thou bid'st me die
To save a perjured life! Oh, spare me yet!
I am too young. Urge me not thus, my heart!

[*Thunder rolls.*]

Oh, agony! Should I go call the guard?
No, all is silence! darkness reigns around:—
Besides, these demons would denounce my father;
Dear father, I should live to thank thy love,—
To cherish and support thy failing years.
Only sixteen!—'tis hard to die so young;—
To feel the keen, sharp dagger at my heart!
Ah me! how cold the plashing rain comes down!
My brain seems fire — but my limbs are ice!
[*A clock in the distance strikes one quarter.*]

SALTABADIL.

'Tis time! [The clock strikes two more quarters.
Three-quarters past eleven now!
Hear'st thou no footsteps? Ere the midnight hour,
It must be done. [He puts his foot on the first stair.

MAGUELONNE (*bursts into tears*).

Oh, brother, wait awhile!

BLANCHE.

This woman weeps, yet I refuse to save.
He loves me not! Have I not prayed for death?
That death would save him, but my heart recoils.

SALTABADIL (*attempting to pass MAGUELONNE*).
I'll wait no longer.

BLANCHE.

If he'd strike me dead
With one sharp sudden blow! not gash my face,

Or mangle me. How chilling falls the rain!
Oh, it is horrible to die so cold.

[SALTABADIL *again attempts to pass* MAGUELONNE.

BLANCHE *gradually drags herself round to the door, and gives a feeble knock.*

MAGUELONNE.

A knock.

SALTABADIL.

'Tis but the wind.

MAGUELONNE (BLANCHE *knocks again*).

Again! — a knock!

[*She runs to the window, opens it, and looks out.*

SALTABADIL (*aside*).

'Tis passing strange!

MAGUELONNE.

Who's there?

(*Aside to* SALTABADIL.) A traveller!

BLANCHE (*faintly*).

A night's repose!

SALTABADIL (*aside*).

A sound eternal sleep!

MAGUELONNE (*aside*).

Aye, a long night indeed!

BLANCHE.

Haste! haste! — I faint!

SALTABADIL.

Give me the knife!

MAGUELONNE.

Poor wretch! his hand hath struck

Upon the portal of his tomb!

(*Aside to* SALTABADIL.) Be quick!

SALTABADIL.

Behind the door, I'll strike him as he comes.

MAGUELONNE (*opening the door to BLANCHE*).
Come in!

BLANCHE (*shuddering*).

I dare not!

MAGUELONNE (*half dragging her in*).

'Tis too late for that!

[*As she passes the threshold, SALTABADIL strikes.*
[*The Curtain falls.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT FIFTH: TRIBOULET

SCENE 1.—*The Stage represents the same scene as the Fourth Act; but the house of SALTABADIL is completely closed. There is no light within. All is darkness.*

[TRIBOULET comes slowly from the back of the stage, enveloped in his mantle. The storm has somewhat diminished in violence. The rain has ceased; but there are occasional flashes of lightning, and distant thunder is heard.]

TRIBOULET.

Now is the triumph mine! The blow is struck
That pays a lingering month of agony.
'Midst sneers and ribald jests, the poor Buffoon
Shed tears of blood beneath his mask of smiles.

[*Examines the door of the house.*]

This is the door — oh vengeance exquisite! —
Thro' which the corse of him I hate shall pass;
The hour has not yet tolled; yet am I here
To gaze upon thy tomb! Mysterious night. [Thunder.
In heaven a tempest; murder upon earth!
Now am I great indeed. My just revenge
Joins with the wrath of God. I've slain the King!!
And such a king! — upon whose breath depends
The thrones of twenty monarchs; and whose voice
Declares to trembling millions, peace or war!
He wields the destinies of half mankind,
And falling thus, the world shall sink with him.
'Tis I that strike this mighty Atlas down!

Through me, all Europe shall his loss bewail.
Affrighted earth, e'en from its utmost bounds,
Shall shriek! Thy arm hath done this, Triboulet.
Triumph, Buffoon! — exult thee in thy pride;
A fool's revenge the globe itself doth shake!

[*The storm continues. A distant clock strikes twelve.*
The hour!! [*He runs to the door, and knocks loudly.*

VOICE (*from within*).
Who knocks?

TRIBOULET.
'Tis I! admit me! haste!

VOICE (*within*).
All's well; but enter not!
[*The lower half of the door is opened, and SALTABADIL
crawls out, dragging after him an oblong-shaped
mass, scarcely distinguishable in the darkness of
the night.*

SCENE 2. — TRIBOULET — SALTABADIL.
SALTABADIL.

How dull a load.
Lend me your aid awhile; within this sack
Your man lies dead!

TRIBOULET.
I'll look upon his face.
Bring me a torch!

SALTABADIL.
By all the saints, not I.

TRIBOULET.
What, canst thou stab, yet fear to look on death?

SALTABADIL.

The guard I fear! — the archers of the night;
You'll have no light from me. My task is done.
The gold!

[TRIBOULET gives it to him, then turns to gaze on the
dead body.

TRIBOULET.

'Tis there! (*Aside*) — so hatred hath its joys!

SALTABADIL.

Shall not I help you to the river's side?

TRIBOULET.

Alone I'll do it.

SALTABADIL.

Lighter 'twere for both.

TRIBOULET.

'Tis a sweet load; to me 'tis light indeed!

SALTABADIL.

Well, as you will; but cast it not from hence.

[*Pointing to another part of the wall.*

The stream runs deepest there. Be quick. Good-night.

[*He re-enters the house, closing the door after him.*

SCENE 3.— TRIBOULET alone, his eyes fixed on the body.

TRIBOULET.

There lies he! dead! Would I could see him now.

[*He examines the sack.*

It matters not, 'tis he! — his spurs peep forth.

Yes! yes! 'tis he!

[*He rises up and places his foot on the body.*

Now, giddy world, look on!

Here see the Jester! There, the King of Kings,

Monarch o'er all, unrivalled, Lord supreme!
Beneath my feet I spurn him as he lies,
The Seine his sepulchre, this sack his shroud.
Who hath done this? 'Tis I — and I alone,
Stupendous victory! When morning dawns
The slavish throng will scarce believe the tale,
But future ages, nations yet unborn
Shall own, and shudder at, the mighty deed.
What, Francis of Valois, thou soul of fire,
Great Charles's greater rival, King of France,
And God of battles! at whose conquering step
The very battlements have quaked for fear!
Hero of Marignan, whose arm o'erthrew
Legions of soldiers, scattered like the dust
Before the impetuous wind! whose actions beamed
Like stars o'ershining all the universe,
Art thou no more? — unshrived, unwept, unknown,
Struck down at once! In all thy power and pride,
From all thy pomps, thy vanities, thy lusts,
Dragged off and hidden like a babe malformed;
Dissolved, extinguished, melted into air;
Appeared and vanished like the lightning's flash.
Perhaps to-morrow, — haggard! trembling! pale!
And prodigal of gold — thro' every street
Criers shall shout, to wond'ring passers by,
Francis the First — Francis the First is lost!
'Tis strange!

(After a short silence.)

But thou, my poor long-suffering child,
Thou hast thy vengeance. What a thirst was mine
That craved for blood! Gold gave the draught! 'Tis
quench'd!

[He bends over the body in a fit of ungovernable rage.]
Perfidious monster! Oh, that thou couldst hear!
My child, more precious than a monarch's crown,
My child, who never injured aught that breathed,
You foully robbed me of, and gave her back

Disgraced and shamed; but now the triumph's mine.
 With well dissembled art I lured thee on,
 And bade thy caution sleep, as if the woe
 That breaks a father's heart could e'er forgive!
 'Twas a hard strife, the weak against the strong:
 The weak hath conquered! He who kissed thy foot
 Hath gnawed thy heartstrings. Dost thou hear me now,
 Thou King of Gentlemen! The wretched slave,
 The Fool, Buffoon, scarce worth the name of man —
 He whom thou called'st dog — now gives the blow!

[He strikes the dead body.]

'Tis vengeance speaks, and at its voice the soul,
 How base soe'er, bursts from its thralling sleep.
 The vilest are ennobled, changed, transformed:
 Then from its scabbard, like a glittering sword,
 The poor oppressed one, draws his hatred forth,
 The stealthy cat's a tiger, and the Fool
 Becomes the executioner of kings.
 Would he could feel how bitterly I hate!
 But 'tis enough. Go seek thou in the Seine
 Some loyal current that against the stream
 May bear thy mangled corse to *Saint Denis*.
 Accursed Francis!

[He takes the sack by one end, and drags it to the edge of the wall; as he is about to place it on the parapet MAGUELONNE comes out, looks round anxiously, and returns with the KING, to whom she makes signs that he may now escape unseen.]

At the moment that TRIBOULET is about to throw the body into the Seine, the KING leaves the stage in the opposite direction, singing carelessly,—

THE KING.

“Changeful woman! — constant never!
 He's a fool who trusts her ever!”

TRIBOULET (*dropping the body on the stage*).

Hah! what voice was that?

Some spectre of the night is mocking me!

[*He turns round, and listens in a state of great agitation. The voice of the KING is again heard in the distance.*]

THE KING.

"For her love the wind doth blow
Like a feather to and fro."

TRIBOULET.

Now, by the curse of Hell! This is not he!
Some one hath saved him! — robbed me of my prey! —
Betrayed! betrayed!

[*Runs to the house, but only the upper window is open.*]

Assassins! — 'Tis too high!

What hapless victim has supplied his place —
What guiltless life? — I shudder! (*Feels the body.*)

'Tis a corpse

But, who hath perished? 'Tis in vain to seek
From this abode of hell — a torch to break
The pitchy darkness of this fearful night!
I'll wait the lightning's glare!

[*He waits some moments, his eyes fixed on the half-opened sack, from which he has partly drawn forth the body of BLANCHE.*]

SCENE 4.— TRIBOULET — BLANCHE.

A flash of lightning! TRIBOULET starts up with a frenzied scream.

TRIBOULET.

Oh, God! My child!

Hah, what is this? My hands are wet with blood —

My daughter! Oh, my brain!—Some hideous dream
Hath seized my senses! 'Tis impossible!
But now she left me! Heaven be kind to me!
'Tis but a maddening vision—'tis not she!

[Another flash of lightning.]

It is my child—my daughter! Dearest Blanche!
These fiends have murdered thee! Oh, speak, my child!
Speak to thy father! Is there none to help?
Speak to me, Blanche! My child! My child! Oh, God!
[He sinks down exhausted.]

BLANCHE.

*(Half-dying, but rallying at the cries of her father—
In a faint voice—)*

Who calls on me?

TRIBOULET *(in an ecstasy of joy)*.

She speaks! She grasps my hand!
Her heart beats yet! All-gracious Heaven, she lives!

BLANCHE.

*[She raises herself to a sitting position. Her coat has
been taken off, her shirt is covered with blood, her
hair hangs loose; the rest of her body is concealed.]*

Where am I?

TRIBOULET.

Dearest, sole delight on earth,
Hear'st thou my voice? Thou know'st me now?

BLANCHE.

My father!

TRIBOULET.

Who hath done this? What dreadful mystery!
I dare not touch, lest I should pain thee, Blanche.
I cannot see, but gently guide my hand.
Where art thou hurt?

BLANCHE (*gasping for breath*).

The knife — has reached — my heart.
I felt — it pierce me.

TRIBOULET.

Who has struck the blow?

BLANCHE.

The fault's mine own, for I deceived thee, father!
I loved too well! And 'tis for him — I die.

TRIBOULET.

Oh, retribution dire! — the dark revenge
I plotted for another falls on me!
But how? — what hand? — Blanche, if thou can'st, explain!

BLANCHE.

Oh, ask me not to speak!

TRIBOULET (*covering her with kisses*).

Forgive me, Blanche!

And yet to lose thee thus!

BLANCHE.

I cannot breathe!

Turn me this way! — Some air!

TRIBOULET.

Blanche! Blanche! my child!

Oh, do not die! (*Turns round in despair.*)

Help, help! Will no one come?

Will no one help my child? The ferry bell
Hangs close against the wall. An instant now
I'll leave thee, but to call assistance here,
And bring thee water.

[BLANCHE makes signs that it is useless.

Yet I must have aid.

(*Shouts for help.*)

What, ho! — Oh, live to bless your father's heart!
My child, my treasure, all that I possess

Is thee, my Blanche! — I cannot part with thee!
Oh, do not die!

BLANCHE (*in the agony of death*).

Help, father! — Raise me up!

Give me some air!

TRIBOULET.

My arm hath pressed on thee.

I am too rough. I think 'tis better now.
Thou hast more ease, dear Blanche! — For mercy's sake,
Try but to breathe till some one pass this way
To bring thee succour. — Help! Oh, help my child!

BLANCHE (*with difficulty*).

Forgive him, father!

[*She dies. Her head falls back on his shoulder.*]

TRIBOULET (*in an agony*).

Blanche! — She's dying; — Help!

[*He runs to the ferry-bell, and rings it furiously.*]

Watch! murder! help!

[*He returns to BLANCHE.*]

Oh, speak to me again.

One word — one, only one. In mercy speak!

[*Essaying to lift her up.*]

Why wilt thou lie so heavily, my child?

Only sixteen! — so young! Thou art not dead.

Thou would'st not leave me thus. Shall thy sweet voice

Ne'er bless thy father more? Oh, God of Heaven!

Why should this be? How cruel 'twas to give

So sweet a blessing. Yet forbear to take

Her soul away ere all its worth I knew.

Why didst thou let me count my treasure o'er?

Would'st thou had died an infant! aye, before

Thy mother's arms had clasped thee! or that day

(When quite a child) thy playmates wounded thee,

I could have borne the loss. But, oh, not now,

My child! my child!

[*A number of people, alarmed by the ringing of the bell,*

now come in, being present during the latter part of the foregoing speech.

A WOMAN.

His sorrow wrings my heart!

TRIBOULET.

So ye are come at last! — indeed, 'twas time!

[*Turning to a waggoner, and seizing him by the arm.*
Hast thou a horse, my friend? — a loaded wain?

WAGGONER.

I have — (*aside*) How fierce his grasp!

TRIBOULET.

Then take my head,
And crush it 'neath thy wheels! — my Blanche! my child!

ANOTHER MAN.

This is some murder! Grief has turned his brain:
Better to part them. [*They drag TRIBOULET away.*

TRIBOULET.

Never! — here I'll stay.

I love to look upon her, though she's dead.
I never wronged ye — why then treat me thus?
I know ye not. Good people, pity me! (*To the Woman.*)
Madam, you weep — you're kind. In mercy beg
They drag me not from hence.

[*The Woman intercedes; they let him come back to the body of BLANCHE. He runs wildly to it, and falls on his knees.*

Upon thy knees —
Upon thy knees, thou wretch, and die with her!

THE WOMAN.

Be calm — be comforted. If thus you rave
You must be parted!

TRIBOULET (*wild with grief*).

No! no! no!

*[Seizes her in his arms, and suddenly stops in his grief
— his senses are evidently wandering.]*

I think

She breathes again. She wants a father's care!

Go some one to the town, and seek for aid:

I'll hold her in my arms.— I'm quiet now.

*[He takes her in his arms and holds her as a mother
would an infant.]*

No! she's not dead, God will not have it so,

He knows that she is all I lov'd on earth.

The poor deformed one was despised by all,

Avoided, hated. None were kind to him

But she! she loved me, my delight, my joy:

When others spurned, she loved and wept with me.

So beautiful, yet dead! Your kerchief, pray,

To smoothe her forehead. See, her lip's still red.

Oh, had you seen her, as I see her still,

But two years old: her pretty hair was then

As fair as gold!

[Presses her to his heart.]

Alas! most foully wronged,

My Blanche, my happiness, my darling child!

When but an infant, oft I've held her thus:

She slept upon my bosom just as now —

And when she woke, her laughing eyes met mine,

And smiled upon me with an angel's smile.

She never thought me hideous, vile, deformed.

Poor girl! she loved her father. Now she sleeps!

Indeed, I know not what I feared before —

She'll soon awaken! Wait awhile, I pray,

You'll see her eyes will open! Friends! you hear

I reason calmly. I'm quite tranquil now;

I'll do whate'er you will, and injure none,

So that you let me look upon my child.

[He gazes upon her face.]

How smooth her brow, no early sorrows there

Have marked the fair entablature of youth.

(Starting.) Ha! I have warmed her little hand in mine.

(*To the people.*) Feel how the pulse return
(*Enter a Surgeon.*)

THE WOMAN (*to TRIBOULET*).

The surgeon's here.

TRIBOULET.

Look, Sir, examine, I'll oppose in nought.
She has but fainted, is't not so?

SURGEON (*after feeling her pulse, says coldly*).

She's dead!

[TRIBOULET *starts up convulsively, the Surgeon goes on examining the wound.*

The wound's in her left side. 'Tis very deep.
Blood must have flowed upon the lungs. She died
By suffocation.

TRIBOULET (*with a scream of agony*).

I have slain my child!

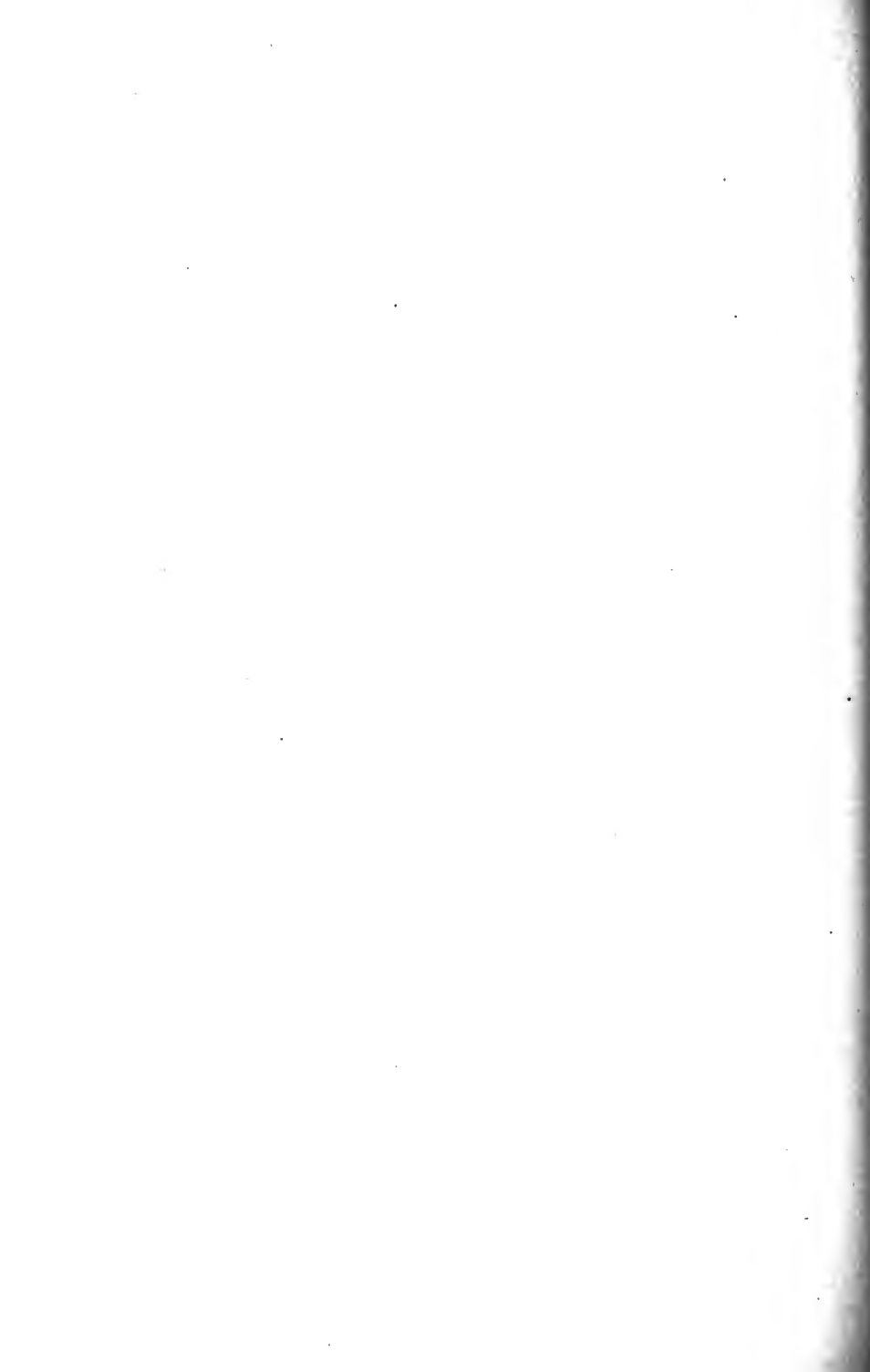
[*He falls senseless on the ground.*

FREDERICK L. SLOUS.

RUY BLAS:
A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

(1838.)

TRANSLATED BY MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THREE sorts of spectators compose what we are accustomed to call the play-going public. Firstly, women; secondly, thinkers; and thirdly, the general crowd. That which the last-named chiefly requires in a dramatic work is action; what most attracts women is passion; but what the thoughtful seek above all else is the portrayal of human nature. If one studies attentively these three classes of spectators this may be remarked; the crowd is so delighted with incident, that often it cares little for characters and passions.¹ Women, whom action likewise interests, are so absorbed in the development of emotion, that they little heed the representation of characters. As for the thoughtful, they so much desire to see characters, that is to say living men, on the scene, that though they willingly accept passion as a natural element in a dramatic work, they are almost troubled by the incidents. Thus what the mass desires on the stage is sensational action; what the women seek is emotion; and what the thoughtful crave is food for meditation. All demand pleasure,—the first, the pleasure of the eyes; the second, the gratification of the feelings; the last, mental enjoyment. Thus on our scene are three distinct sorts of work; the one common and inferior, the two others illustrious and superior, but all supplying a want: melodrama for the crowd; tragedy which analyses passion for the women; and for the thinkers, comedy that paints human nature.

¹ That is to say, style. For if action can in many cases express itself by action alone, passions and characters, with few exceptions, are expressed by speech. Now the words of the drama—words fixed and not fluctuating—form style.

Let the personage speak as he should speak, *sibi constet*, says Horace. All is in that.

Let us say, in passing, that we do not lay down an infallible law, and we entreat the reader to make for himself the restrictions which our opinions may contain. Rules always admit of exceptions; we know well that the crowd is a great body, in which all qualities are to be found,—the instinct for the beautiful and the taste for mediocrity, love of the ideal and liking for the matter-of-fact. We know also that every great intellect ought to be feminine on the tender side of the heart; and we are aware that, thanks to that mysterious law which attracts the sexes to each other, as well mentally as bodily, very often a woman is a thinker. This understood, and after again beseeching the reader not to attach too rigid a meaning to our statement, there only remains for us to proceed.

To every man who considers seriously the three sorts of spectators we have just indicated it will be evident that all are to be justified. The women are right in wishing to have their hearts touched; the thinkers are right in desiring to be taught; and the crowd is not wrong in wishing to be amused. From these established facts the laws of the drama are deduced. In truth, that fiery barrier called the footlights separates the world of reality from that ideal world where the dramatist's art is to create, and make live in conditions combined of art and nature, characters, that is to say, and we repeat it, men; into these men and these characters to fling the passions which develop some and modify others; and at last, in the conflict of these characters and these passions with the great laws of Providence to show human life, that is to say events, great and small, pathetic, comic, and terrible, which prove for the heart what we call interest, and for the mind what may be considered the truths of moral philosophy; such is the aim of the drama. One sees that the drama is tragedy by its illustration of the passions, and comedy by its portrayal of characters. The mixed drama is the third great form of the art, comprising, encircling, and making fruitful the two others. Corneille and Molière would remain independent of each other if Shakespeare were not

between them, giving to Corneille his left hand, and to Molière his right. In this manner the two opposite electric forces of comedy and tragedy meet, and the spark struck out is the drama.

In explaining, as he understands them, and as he has already often stated, the laws and the end of the drama, the author is not ignorant of the limitation of his own powers. He defines now — and let it be so understood — not what he has done, but what he has endeavoured to do. He shows what his aim was. Nothing more.

We can but write a few lines at the beginning of this book; we have not space for necessary details. Let us then be permitted to pass on, without dwelling otherwise on the transition from the general ideas which we have just indicated, and which in our opinion, the conditions of the ideal being maintained, rule the entire art, to some of the special reflections which this drama, *Ruy Blas*, will suggest to the attentive mind.

And first, to take only one side of the question, from the point of view of the philosophy of history, what is the spirit of his drama? Let us explain. At the moment when a monarchy is about to fall several phenomena may be observed. First, the nobility has a tendency to break up, and in dissolving divides after this fashion: —

The kingdom totters, the dynasty destroys itself, law decays; political unity crumbles away by the action of intrigue; the best born of society are corrupt and degenerate; a mortal enfeeblement is felt on all sides without and within; great purposes of the state fall low, and only little ones stand forth — a mournful public spectacle; more police, more soldiers, more taxes; every one divines the end has come. Hence among all there is a weariness of expectancy and fear of the future, distrust of all men, and general discouragement, with profound discontent. As the malady of the State is in the head, the nobility, who are the nearest, are the first attacked. What becomes of them then? One party, the least worthy and the least generous, remains at court. All will soon be

engulfed, there is no time to be lost, men must hasten to enrich and aggrandise themselves and profit by circumstances. Each thinks only of himself. Without pity for the country each man acquires a little private fortune in some department of the public evil. He is courtier and minister, and hastens to be prosperous and powerful. He is clever and unscrupulous, and he succeeds. Offices of the state, honours, places, money, they take all, and covet all, and pillage everywhere; they live only for ambition and cupidity. They hide the evils which human infirmity may engender, under a grave exterior. And as this debased life, given up to the excitements of the vanities and pleasures of pride, has for its first condition oblivion of all proper sentiments, a man is made ferocious by leading it. When the day of misfortune arrives some monstrous quality is developed in the fallen courtier, and the man becomes a fiend.

The desperate state of the kingdom drives the other half of the nobility, the best and best born, into another mode of living. They retire to their palaces, their estates and country houses. They have a horror of public affairs, they can do nothing, the end of the world is at hand, what use is it to lament? They must divert themselves, and shut their eyes, live, drink, love, and be merry. Who knows? Have they not yet perhaps a year before them? This said, or even simply thought, the gentleman takes the thing in earnest, multiplies his establishment tenfold, buys horses, enriches women, orders fêtes, pays for orgies, flings away, gives, sells, buys, mortgages, forfeits, devours, gives himself up to money lenders, and sets fire at the four corners to all he has. One fine morning a misfortune happens to him. It is that, though the monarchy goes down hill at great speed, he himself is ruined before it. All is finished, all is burnt. Of this fine blazing life there remains not even the smoke that has passed away; some ashes, nothing more. Forgotten and deserted by all except his creditors, the poor gentleman then becomes what he may,—a little of the adventurer, a little of the swash-buckler, a little of the

Bohemian. He sinks and disappears in the crowd, that great, dull, black mass, which until this day he has scarcely noticed, from afar off, under his feet. He plunges therein and takes refuge there. He has no more gold, but there remains to him the sun, that wealth of those who have nothing. At first he dwelt in the highest society; see, now that he herds with the lowest, and accommodates himself to it, he laughs at his ambitious relative who is rich and powerful; he becomes a philosopher, and compares thieves to courtiers. For the rest he is good natured, brave, loyal and intelligent; a mixture of poet, prince and scamp; laughing at everything; making his comrades to-day thrash the watch, as formerly he bade his servants, but not doing it himself; combining in his manner, with some grace, the assurance of a marquis with the effrontery of a gipsy; soiled outside, but wholesome within; and having nothing left of the gentleman but his honour which he guards, his name which he hides, and his sword which he shows.

If the double picture we have just drawn is a faithful representation of the state of all monarchies at a given moment, it is especially and in a striking manner true of that of Spain at the close of the seventeenth century. Thus, if the author has succeeded in executing this part of his plan, which he is far from assuming, in the drama before the reader, the first half of the Spanish nobility of that period is depicted in Don Salluste, and the second half in Don Cæsar; the two being cousins, as is seemly.

Here, as throughout, let it be well understood that in sketching our outline of the Castilian nobles towards 1695 we would wish to reserve rare and revered exceptions. Let us continue.

Always in examining this monarchy and this epoch, below the nobility thus divided — and which up to a certain point may be personified in the two men just named — one sees trembling in the shade something great, gloomy, and unrecognized. It is the people. The people for whom is the future but not the present; the people orphans, poor, intel-

lignant and strong, placed very low, and aspiring very high; bearing on their backs the marks of servitude, and in their hearts the premonitions of genius; the people serfs of the great lords, in their abject misery, in love with the only form which in this decaying society represents for them in divine radiance authority, charity, and fertility. The people should be represented in the character of Ruy Blas.

Now above these three men, who thus considered should make move and be apparent to the spectator three facts, and in these facts all the Spanish monarchy of the seventeenth century,—above these men, we say, is a pure and luminous creature, a woman, a queen. Unhappy as wife, because she is as if she had not a husband; unhappy as queen, because she lives as if without a king; inclining towards those beneath her by royal pity, and also perhaps by womanly instinct, looking downwards, while Ruy Blas — personification of the people — looks up.

In the author's opinion, and without wishing to slight what the accessory characters may contribute to the truthfulness of the entire work, those four personages, so grouped, comprise the leading principles which present themselves to the philosophical historian of the Spanish Monarchy as it was a hundred and forty years ago.¹ To those four personages we might add a fifth, namely, Charles the Second. But in history, as in the drama, Charles the Second of Spain is not a figure, but a shadow.

Now let us hasten to say that what has just been stated is not an explanation of *Ruy Blas*. It is only one of the aspects. It is the impression which, if the drama be worth studying seriously and conscientiously, would be produced on the mind from the point of view of the philosophy of history.

But, small as it may be, this drama, like everything in the world, has many aspects, and it can be looked at in many other ways. One can take many views of an idea, as of a

¹ Written in 1838.

mountain. It depends on our position. Let pass, for the sake of making ourselves clear, a comparison that is infinitely too presumptuous. Mont Blanc seen from the Croix-de-Fléchères does not resemble Mont Blanc seen from Salenches. It is, however, always Mont Blanc.

In the same manner, to descend from a very great thing to a very little one, this drama, of which we have just indicated the historical meaning, presents quite another aspect if we look at it from a still more elevated point of view, that is to say the purely human. Then Don Salluste would be the personification of absolute egotism, anxiety without rest; Don Cæsar, his opposite in all respects, would be regarded as the type of generosity and thoughtless carelessness; and Ruy Blas would express the spirit and passion of the community, and springing forth the higher in proportion to the violence of their compression; the queen would exemplify virtue undermined by wearying monotony.

Simply from the literary point of view the aspect of this design, such as it is, entitled *Ruy Blas*, would again change. The three governing forms of the art would appear there personified and summed up. Don Salluste would be the mixed drama; Don Cæsar, comedy; and Ruy Blas, tragedy. The drama provides action, comedy confuses it, and tragedy decides it.

All these aspects are just and true, but not one of them is complete. Absolute truth is only to be found in the entire work. If each finds therein what he seeks, the poet, who does not flatter himself about the remainder, will have attained his end. The philosophical motive of *Ruy Blas* is a people aspiring to a higher state; the human subject is a man who loves a woman; the dramatic interest is a lackey who loves a queen. The crowd who flock every night to witness this work, because in France public attention never fails to be directed to mental efforts, whatever they may be besides, the crowd, we say, see only in *Ruy Blas* the last, the dramatic subject, the lackey; and they are right.

And what we have just said of *Ruy Blas* seems to us appli-

cable to every other production. The old renowned works of the masters are even more remarkable in that they offer more facets to study than others. *Tartuffe* makes some laugh, and others tremble. *Tartuffe* is the domestic serpent — the hypocrite; or rather, hypocrisy. He is sometimes a man, and sometimes an idea. *Othello* is for some but a black man who loves a fair woman; for others he is an upstart who has married a patrician; for some he is a jealous man; for others the personification of jealousy. And this diversity of opinion takes nothing from the fundamental unity of the composition. We have said so elsewhere; there are a thousand branches and one trunk.

If in this work the author has particularly insisted on the historical significance of *Ruy Blas*, it is that in his opinion, by its historical meaning — and it is true by that alone — *Ruy Blas* is allied to *Hernani*. The grand fact of the condition of the nobles is shown in *Hernani*, as in *Ruy Blas*, by the side of existing royalty. Only in *Hernani*, as an absolute monarchy was not yet established, the nobility still struggled with the king, here by haughtiness, there by the sword, in a mixture of feudalism and rebellion. In 1519 the great lord lived far from court, in the mountains as bandit like *Hernani*, or in patriarchal state like *Ruy Gomez*. Two centuries later the position is changed. The vassals have become courtiers, and if from circumstances the noble has still occasion to conceal his name, it is not to escape from the king, but to elude his creditors. He does not become a bandit, he turns Bohemian. One feels that royal despotism has passed during these long years over the noble heads, bending some and crushing others.

And, if we may be permitted this last word between *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas*, two centuries of Spanish life are framed; two great centuries, during which the descendants of Charles the Fifth were permitted to rule the world; two centuries of a state which Providence — and it is a remarkable thing — would not prolong another hour, for Charles the Fifth¹ was

¹ Charles the Fifth of Germany and First of Spain.

born in 1500, and Charles the Second died in 1700. In 1700 Louis the Fourteenth inherited from Charles the Fifth, as in 1800 Napoleon inherited from Louis the Fourteenth. These great dynastic apparitions, which from time to time illuminate history, are for the author a beautiful and pathetic spectacle to which the eyes often turn. He tries at times to transfer something of their interest to his works. Thus he has striven to show *Hernani* in the bright light of an aurora, and to cover *Ruy Blas* with the gloom of twilight. In *Hernani* the sun of the House of Austria was rising; in *Ruy Blas* it was setting.

PARIS, November 25th, 1838.

22. 11. 1950

1. 11. 1950

2. 11. 1950

3. 11. 1950

4. 11. 1950

5. 11. 1950

PERSONAGES OF THE DRAMA

RUY BLAS.

DON SALLUSTE DE BAZAN.

DON CÉSAR DE BAZAN.

DON GURITAN.

THE COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

THE MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.

THE MARQUIS DEL BASTO.

THE COUNT D'ALBE.

THE MARQUIS DE PRIEGO.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

MONTAZGO.

DON ANTONIO UBILLA.

COVADENGA.

GUDIEL.

A Lackey.

An Alcaid.

An Usher.

An Alguazil.

A Page.

Doña MARIA DE NEUBOURG, Queen of Spain.

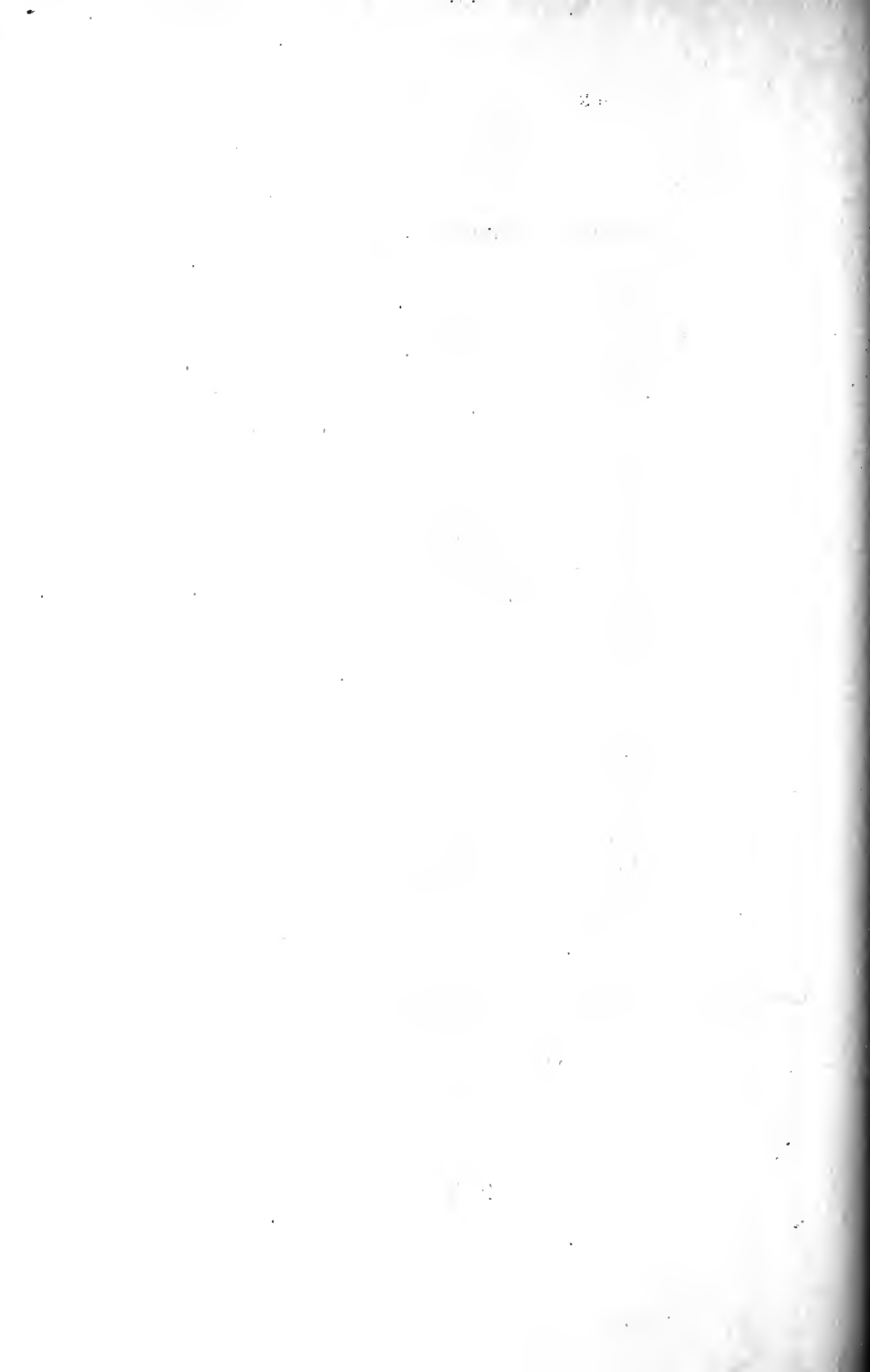
THE DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE.

CASILDA.

A DUENNA.

Ladies, Lords, Privy Councillors, Pages, Duennas, Alguazils, Guards,
and Gentlemen Ushers.

MADRID, 169 —.



RUY BLAS

ACT FIRST: DON SALLUSTE

[*The Hall of Danaé in the King's Palace at Madrid. Magnificent furniture in the half-Flemish Style of Philip IV. At the left, a large window with small squares of glass set in gilt frames. On each side a low door leading to some interior apartments. At the back, a large glass partition with gilt frames opens by a glass door on a long corridor. This corridor, which stretches all along the stage, is concealed by wide curtains that fall from top to bottom of the glass partition. A table with writing materials, and an easy chair.*

DON SALLUSTE enters by the little door at the left, followed by RUY BLAS, and by GUDIEL, who carries a cash-box and other packages as if in preparation for a journey. DON SALLUSTE is dressed in black velvet, in the fashion of the Court of Charles II., and wears the Golden Fleece. Over his black dress he has a rich mantle of light velvet embroidered with gold and lined with black satin. A sword with a large hilt. A hat with white feathers. GUDIEL is in black and wears a sword. RUY BLAS is in livery — leggings and undercoat brown; overcoat turned up with red and gold. Bareheaded and without a sword.

SCENE 1.—DON SALLUSTE DE BAZAN, GUDIEL;
RUY BLAS at intervals.

DON SALLUSTE.

That window open, Ruy Blas — and shut
The door.

[RUY BLAS obeys, and then, at a sign from DON SALLUSTE goes out by the door at the back. DON SALLUSTE walks to the window.]

All here still sleep. 'Tis nearly dawn.

(He turns suddenly towards GUDIEL.)

It is a thunderbolt! Ah, yes, my reign
Is over, Gudiel! Exiled and disgraced,
All lost in but a day. At present, though,
The thing is secret — speak not of it, pray.
Yes, only for a little love affair,
— At my age senseless folly I admit —
And with a nobody — a serving maid
Seduced — ill luck! because she was about
The Queen, who brought the girl from Neubourg here.
This creature wept, complained of me, and dragg'd
Into the royal chambers her young brat;
Then I was ordered to espouse the girl,
And I refused. They banished me. Me — me
They exiled! After twenty years of work
So difficult, engaging day and night,
Years of ambition. I, the President,
Abhorr'd by all the Court Alcalds, who named
Me but with dread. Chief of the house Bazan
That is so proud; my credit, power, and all
I did, and had, and dreamed, honours and place
One moment sweeps away, amid the roars
Of laughter of the crowd.

GUDIEL.

None know it yet,

My Lord.

DON SALLUSTE.

Ah, but to-morrow! 'Twill be known
To-morrow! We shall then be on our way.
I will not fall. No, no, I'll disappear.
(He hastens to unbutton his doublet.)

You always fasten me as if I were
A priest. You strain my doublet; and oh, now
I stifle.

(He sits down.)

Ah, with th' air of innocence
I'll dig a deep, dark mine! Chased — chased away!
(He rises.)

GUDIEL.

Whence came the blow, my Lord?

DON SALLUSTE.

'Twas from the Queen.

Oh, Gudiel, I will be revenged. Thou know'st,
Thou understandest me — whom thou hast taught
And aided well for twenty years in things
Long past. Thou know'st where turn my darken'd
thoughts,

As a skill'd architect can at a glance
Measure the depth of wells that he has sunk.
I will set out for my Castilian lands,
Estates of Finlas there to brood and plan.
All for a girl! Thou must — for time is short —
Arrange for our departure. First I'd speak
A word at any risk unto the scamp
Thou know'st. It may be that he proves of use.
I know not. But till night I'm master here.
I will have vengeance — how I cannot tell;
But I will make it terrible. Go now,
At once get ready — hasten — silent be!
You shall go with me — hasten.

[GUDIEL bows and exit. DON SALLUSTE calls.
Ruy Blas!

RUY BLAS (*appearing at the door at the back*).
Excellency?

DON SALLUSTE.

Within the Palace walls

I sleep no more; thus shutters should be closed,
The keys be left.

RUY BLAS.
My Lord, it shall be done.

DON SALLUSTE.
Listen, I beg. In two hours will the Queen,
In coming back from mass unto her room
Of state, pass through the corridor; you must
Be there.

RUY BLAS.
I will, my Lord.

DON SALLUSTE (*at the window*).

See you that man
I' the square — a paper to the guard he shows
And passes? Sign to him without a word
That he may enter by the back stair way.

[RUY BLAS obeys. DON SALLUSTE continues, pointing to the little door on the right.
Before you go look in the guard room there —
See if three Alguazils on duty are
As yet awake.

RUY BLAS (*He goes to the door, half opens it
and comes back*).

My Lord, they sleep.

DON SALLUSTE.

Speak low.

I shall be wanting you, so go not far
Away. Keep watch that we be not disturbed.

[Enter DON CÉSAR DE BAZAN. Hat staved in. A
ragged cloak, which conceals all his dress except
stockings that hang loose, and shoes that are
split open. Sword of a brawler.

As he enters, he and RUY BLAS glance at each other
from opposite sides with gestures of surprise,

DON SALLUSTE (*observing them, aside*).
Looks were exchanged! Can they each other know!
[*Exit RUY BLAS.*]

SCENE 2.—DON SALLUSTE — DON CÆSAR.

DON SALLUSTE.
So, bandit, you are here!

DON CÆSAR.
Yes, cousin, yes.
Behold me.

DON SALLUSTE.
Great the pleasure 'tis to see
'A beggar!

DON CÆSAR (*bowing*).
I delighted am. . . .

DON SALLUSTE.
Your doings, sir. We know

DON CÆSAR (*graciously*).
Which you approve?

DON SALLUSTE.
Oh yes,
They're mighty meritorious. Don Charles
De Mira but the other night was robb'd.
They took from him his sword with scabbard chased,
And shoulder belt. As 'twas near Easter Eve,
And he a knight of bless'd St. James, the band
Let him retain his cloak.

DON CÆSAR.
Just heaven, why?

DON SALLUSTE.

Because upon it was embroidered plain
The order. Well, what say you to all this?

DON CÆSAR.

The devil! I but say we live in times
Most dreadful. Oh, what will become of us
If thieves pay court to good St. James, and count
Him of themselves?

DON SALLUSTE.

You were with them.

DON CÆSAR.

Well, yes;

If I must speak, I was. But your Don Charles
I did not touch. I only gave advice.

DON SALLUSTE.

Worse still. Last night, just when the moon had set,
A crowd of low riff-raff,—all sorts of men,
Shoeless and ragged, rushed out from their dens
Pell-mell unto the Mayor Square, and then
Attacked the guard. There you were.

DON CÆSAR.

Cousin, yes,

'Tis true. But always I disdain to fight
The mere thief-catchers. There I was — that's all;
For during all the row, I walked apart
Beneath th' Arcade, verse making. Ah, they knock'd
Each other about finely.

DON SALLUSTE.

That's not all.

DON CÆSAR.

Well, what is it?

DON SALLUSTE.

'Mong other things, in France
They say that you, with rebels like yourself,
Did force the lock of the strong money box
Of the Excise.

DON CÆSAR.

Oh, I deny it not,
France is the country of an enemy.

DON SALLUSTE.

Again, in Flanders, meeting with Don Paul
Barthélemy, who then had just received
The product of a vineyard he was charged
To carry to Mons' noble Chapter, you
Laid hands upon it, though the gold belonged
E'en to the clergy.

DON CÆSAR.

In Flanders, was it?
It might be so, for I have travelled much.
And is that all?

DON SALLUSTE.

The sweat of shame, Don Cæsar,
To my forehead mounts whene'er I think of you.

DON CÆSAR.

Well, let it mount.

DON SALLUSTE.

Our family ——

DON CÆSAR.

No, stay;
For only unto you in all Madrid
My real name is known. So do not speak
Of family.

DON SALLUSTE.

Only the other day,

A marchioness, when leaving Church, spoke thus:
Who is that brigand there below, who struts
With nose turned up, and eyes upon the watch,
Squaring himself with arms a-kinbo set?
More tatter'd far than Job, and prouder he
Than a Braganza — covering his rags
With arrogance — handling his big sword-hilt
Beneath his sleeve, that's all in slits, the while
The blade about his heels hangs as he steps
With masterful air, his cloak in dented gaps
Resembling saws, his stockings all awry.

DON CÆSAR (*glancing at his own attire*).
And then, of course, you promptly answered her,
It is dear Zafari!

DON SALLUSTE.

No Sir, I blush'd.

DON CÆSAR.

Ah, well, the lady had her laugh. I like
To make a woman laugh.

DON SALLUSTE.

Your comrades are

Swashbucklers infamous.

DON CÆSAR.

Mere learners they —
Scholars — each one as gentle as a sheep.

DON SALLUSTE.

You everywhere are seen with women vile.

DON CÆSAR.

Oh Love's bright radiance! Oh sweet Isabels!
What fine things now one hears of you! A shame
It is to treat you thus — beauties with sly
And laughing eyes, to whom I tell at night
The sonnets I have made at morn.

DON SALLUSTE.

In short,

The friend you are of Matalobos, that
Galician thief who desolates Madrid,
Defying our police.

DON CÆSAR.

If you will deign

I beg you let us reason. Without him
Bare-backed I should have been — that would have looked
Unseemly. Seeing me without a coat,
Though it was winter time, he felt for me.—
That amber-perfumed fop, the Count of Albe,
Was robbed but lately of his doublet fine,
His silken one ——

DON SALLUSTE.

Well?

DON CÆSAR.

I it is who have it,

Matalobos gave it me.

DON SALLUSTE.

The Count's pelisse!

And you are not ashamed?

DON CÆSAR.

I'm n'er ashamed

Of wearing a good coat, 'broidered, galloon'd,
That keeps me warm in winter — makes me smart
In summer time. Look, here it is, quite new.

*[He half opens his cloak, and shows a superb doublet
of rose-colored satin embroidered in gold.]*

By scores, love-letters written to the Count
Are cramm'd i' the pockets. Oft, when poor, love-sick,
With nought to eat, a steaming vent hole I
Discover, from the which comes up the smell

Of cooking, cheating then by turns my heart
And stomach, I can sit me down to read
The Count's sweet letters, revelling there alike
I' the scent of feasting, and a dream of love.

DON SALLUSTE.

Don Cæsar —

DON CÆSAR.

Cousin, now a truce, I beg,
Unto reproaches. A grandee I am,
And of your kindred. Cæsar is my name,
The Count Garofa, but upon my birth
'Twas folly crown'd me. Lands and palaces
I had, and well I paid the Célimènes.
Pshaw! Scarcely twenty years I knew before
The whole had vanished, only there remained
Of my good fortune — true or false — a pack
Of creditors to howl about my heels.
Good faith! I took to flight and changed my name.
Now am I but a boon companion found,
Zafari, whom none know by other name
Save you. No money, Master, give you me;
I do without. At night, with head upon
The stones, before the ancient palace walls
Of Tevé, there these nine years past I've stopp'd.
I slumber with the blue sky overhead,
And happy thus. 'Tis a fine fortune, mine!
The world believes me to the Indies gone,
Or to the devil — dead. The fountain near
Supplies my drink, and afterwards I walk
With air of glory. My own palace, whence
My money flew, is tenanted to-day
By the Pope's Nuncio, Espinola. Well
When I by chance am there, I give advice
Unto the Nuncio's workmen — occupied

In sculpturing a Bacchus o'er the door.—
But will you lend me just ten crowns?

DON SALLUSTE.

Hear me —

DON CÆSAR (*crossing his arms*).

Now, what is't you would say?

DON SALLUSTE.

I sent for you

That I might serve you. I, childless and rich,
And much the elder, see you, Cæsar, now
With sorrow and regret to ruin dragged,
And fain would save you. Bully that you are,
You are unfortunate. I'll pay your debts,
Restore your palace — place you at the Court,
And make of you again a lady-killer.
Let then Zafari be extinguished now,
And Cæsar newly born. I wish that you
Henceforth should, at your will, my fortune use
Fearless, and taking with both hands, nor care
For future needs. When we have relatives
We must support them, and be pitiful.

[*While DON SALLUSTE is speaking DON CÆSAR's countenance takes more and more the expression of astonishment, joyous and hopeful. At last he bursts out.*

DON CÆSAR.

You always had a devil's wit, and what
You've said just now 's most eloquently put.
Go on.

DON SALLUSTE.

Yes, Cæsar, I will do all this
On one condition. I'll explain it all
A moment hence. First take my purse.

DON CÆSAR (*weighing the purse, which is full of gold*).
This is

Magnificent!

DON SALLUSTE.

And I intend for you
Five hundred ducats.

DON CÆSAR (*bewildered*).
Marquis!

DON SALLUSTE.

From to-day.

DON CÆSAR.

By Jove, I'm yours to order. Now then tell
Conditions — name them. On a brave man's faith
My sword is at your service to command.
Your slave I am, and, if you wish it so,
I'll cross blades with the Don Spavento, who
A captain is that comes from hell.

DON SALLUSTE.

No, not
Your sword can I accept, for reasons good.

DON CÆSAR.

What then? Right little else have I.

DON SALLUSTE (*drawing nearer and lowering his voice*).
You know,

And in this case 'tis lucky, all the rogues
About Madrid.

DON CÆSAR.

You do me honour.

DON SALLUSTE.

You

Can always in your train bring all the pack;
You could raise up a tumult if need be.
I know it. All this may be useful now.

DON CÆSAR.

Upon my word it seems you would invent
An opera. What part am I to take?
Shall I compose the verse, or symphony?
Command, I for a frolic row am good.

DON SALLUSTE (*gravely*).

'Tis to Don Cæsar that I speak, and not
Zafari (*lowering his voice more and more*). List! 'Tis for a
stern result

I need that some one should in secret work
And aid me with his skill to bring about
A great event. Not mischievous am I,
But times there are when without any shame
One the most delicate turns up his sleeves
And sets to work. Thou shalt be rich, but thou
Must help me silently to spread a net
As in the night bird-catchers do. A web
That's strong, but hid by shining glass, a snare
Such as is set for lark or girl. The plan,
It must be terrible and wonderful.
I think you are not very scrupulous.—
Avenge me.

DON CÆSAR.

You avenge!

DON SALLUSTE.

Yes, me.

DON CÆSAR.

On whom?

DON SALLUSTE.

A woman.

DON CÆSAR (*drawing himself up and looking haughtily at*
DON SALLUSTE).

Halt! and say no more of this
To me. Now, Cousin, on my soul I'll speak

My mind to you. He who can claim the right
A sword to bear, and yet by stealthy means
Takes vengeance basely — on a woman too,—
Who, born patrician, acts the bailiff's part,
Were he grandee of Old Castile, and did
A hundred clarions follow him, and sound
Their din, were he with orders harness'd, were
He Marquis, Viscount, of the lineal heir
Of blameless, noble sire — for me he'd be
Only a scoundrel of the deepest dye,
Whom for such villainy I'd gladly see
Upon the gallows, hanging by four nails.

DON SALLUSTE.

Cæsar! —

DON CÆSAR.

Add not a word, outrageous 'tis.

[*He throws the purse at the feet of DON SALLUSTE.*

There — keep your secret and your money too.

Ah, I can comprehend a theft, a stroke

That's murderous, or in darkness of the night

The forcing of prison doors — hatchet in hand

And with a hundred desperate buccaneers,

With howl and thrust, to slaughter jailers there,

Claiming, we bandits, for an eye an eye,

And tooth for tooth — men against men. That's well.

But stealthily a woman to destroy,

And dig a trap beneath her feet — perchance

Abuse her, for who knows what chance may be? —

To take this poor bird in some hideous snare —

Oh, rather than accomplish such dishonour,

And be at such a price, my noble Lord,

So rich and great — I say before my God,

Who sees my soul, much sooner would I choose —

Than reach such odious infamy — that dogs

Should gnaw my bones beneath the pillory.

DON SALLUSTE.

Cousin ——

DON CÆSAR.

Your benefits I shall not need,
So long as I shall find in my free life
Fountains of water — in the fields fresh air,
And in the town a thief who me provides
With winter raiment; in my soul shall be
Forgetfulness of past prosperity,
When, Sir, before your palace's great doors,
At noon I lay me down, my head in shade
And feet in sunshine, without thought for what
May be on waking. So adieu;—'tis God
Can judge between us. Now, Don Salluste, you
I leave with people of the Court, who are
Of your own sort; I with the scamps will stay.
I herd with wolves, but not with serpents.

DON SALLUSTE.

Hold

An instant ——

DON CÆSAR.

Now, my master, cease. Let us
Cut short this visit; if 'twas meant to trap
And send me off to prison — do it quick.

DON SALLUSTE.

I thought you, Cæsar, much more hardened. Ah,
My trial of you has succeeded well.
I now am satisfied. Your hand, I pray.

DON CÆSAR.

How — what?

DON SALLUSTE.

'Twas but in jest I spoke to you.
All that I said just now was but a test,
And nothing more.

DON CÆSAR.

You've set me dreaming, though,
About a woman, vengeance, and a plot —

DON SALLUSTE.

A trap — imagination, that was all.

DON CÆSAR.

Ah, well and good! — But how about my debts?
Is paying them imagination, too?
And the five hundred ducats promised me?

DON SALLUSTE.

I'm going now to fetch them.

[He goes towards the door at the back, and makes a sign to RUY BLAS to come in.]

DON CÆSAR (*aside, at the front, and looking across to*
DON SALLUSTE).

Hum! The face

A traitor's is. And when the mouth says yes,
The look implies, perhaps.

DON SALLUSTE (*to RUY BLAS*).

Ruy Blas, stay here.

(*to DON CÆSAR.*)

I'm coming back.

*[Exit by little door at left. As soon as he is gone,
DON CÆSAR and RUY BLAS approach each other
eagerly.]*

SCENE 3.—DON CÆSAR — RUY BLAS.

DON CÆSAR.

No, I was not deceived;
Upon my faith, 'tis thou, Ruy Blas!

RUY BLAS.

'Tis thou,

Zafari! But how comest thou within
The palace?

DON CÆSAR.

Oh, by chance. But soon I take
Myself away. I am a bird, and like
Free space. But thou? this livery? is it worn
For a disguise?

RUY BLAS (*bitterly*).

No, I'm disguised when I

Am otherwise.

DON CÆSAR.

What is it that you say?

RUY BLAS.

Give me thy hand to press again, as in
The happy time of joy and wretchedness.
When without home I lived, hungry by day
And cold at night, when I at least was free!
Then when thou knew'st me, I was still a man;
Born of the people both of us — alas!
It was life's morn! — So much alike we were
That many thought us brothers, and from dawn
Of day we caroll'd — and at night we slept
Before our God, our Father and our Host,
Beneath starr'd heaven sleeping side by side.
Yes, we shared all things — but at last there came
The day — the mournful hour when we were forced
To go our different ways, but now unchanged,
After four years I find thee still the same;
As joyous as a child, and free as are
The gipsy folk. Always Zafari, rich
Though poor, who never had, and never aught
Desired! But as for me, what change! What can
I say, my brother? Orphan boy, brought up
From charity at College! nursed in pride
And science, it but proved a mournful boon.

Instead of skilful workman I was made
A dreamer. Thou hast known me well. My thoughts
And aspirations lifted I to heav'n
In strophes wild. Against thy railing laugh
I brought a hundred answers. Knowing then
That strange ambition fired my soul, what need
Had I to work? But towards an end unseen
I moved; I thought dreams true and possible,
'And hoped all things from fate.— And since I am
Of those who pass long, idle days in thought
Before some palace gorged with wealth — and watch
The Duchesses go in and out — one day,
When torn by hunger in the street, I picked
Up bread where I could find it; — brother, 'twas
By ignominious sluggishness. Oh, when
I was but twenty, full of confidence
In my own powers, I barefoot walked, but lost
In meditations on humanity;
I built up many plans, a mountain made
Of projects. Pitying the ills of Spain
I thought, poor soul, that by the world myself
Was needed. Friend, the issue see — behold,
I am a lackey!

DON CÆSAR.

Yes, I know full well
That want is a low door, which, when we must
By stern necessity pass through, doth force
The greatest to bend down the most. But fate
Has ever ebb and flow. So hope, I say.

RUY BLAS (*shaking his head*).

My master is the Marquis of Finlas.

DON CÆSAR.

I know him. Is it, then, that you reside
Within this palace?

RUY BLAS.

No! until to-day,

Just now, I never have the threshold cross'd.

DON CÆSAR.

Ah, is it so? Your master from his place,
His duties, must live here himself?

RUY BLAS.

Oh yes,

The Court may want him any hour. But he
A little secret dwelling has — where perhaps
In daylight he has never yet been seen.
An unobtrusive house, a hundred steps
Beyond the palace; brother, there I live;
And by the secret door, of which alone
He has the key, sometimes at night he comes
Followed by men whom he lets in. These men
Are masked and speak in whispering tones. They are
Shut in together, and none ever knows
What passes then. Of two black mutes I am
The master and companion. But my name
They know not.

DON CÆSAR.

Yes, 'tis there that he receives
His spies, as Chief of the Alcaids. 'Tis there
He plans his many snares. Subtle is he,
And holds all in his hand.

RUY BLAS.

'Twas yesterday

He said "you must be at the palace ere
The dawn; and enter by the golden grill."
I came, and then he made me don this suit,
This odious livery which you see me in,
And which to-day I for the first time wear.

DON CÆSAR.

Still hope!

RUY BLAS.

I hope! But you know nothing yet.
To breathe 'neath this degrading garb, to lose
The joy and pride of life — all this is naught.
To be a slave and vile, what matters that!
But listen, brother, well. I do not feel
This servile dress, for at my heart there dwells
A hydra, with the fangs of flame, that binds
Me in its fiery folds. If the outside
Has shocked you — what would be could you but look
Within?

DON CÆSAR.

What can you mean?

RUY BLAS.

Invent — suppose —
Imagine — search your mind for all strange things
Unheard of, mad, and horrible — a fate
Bewildering! Yes, compose a deadly draught,
And dig a pit more black than crime, more dull
Than folly, still my secret thou wilt not
Approach. Thou canst not guess it! Ah, who could,
Zafari? In the gulf where destiny
Has plunged me — plunge thine eyes! I love the queen!

DON CÆSAR.

Good heavens!

RUY BLAS.

Beneath a splendid canopy,
Adorned at top with the Imperial globe
There is in Aranjuez, or may be
In the Escorial — or sometimes here —
A man that scarce is looked on from below,
Or named, except with dread — before whose eyes
We all of equal meanness seem, as if

That he were God. A man that men gaze on
With trembling, serving him on bended knee.
To in his presence stand with cover'd head
Is token of high honour. If he will'd
Our heads should fall, a sign would be enough.
His every whim is an event. He lives
Alone — superb — encased in majesty,
So bulwark'd and profound, its weight is felt
Through half the world. Well, now thou understand'st
That I the lackey — ah, yes even I
Am jealous of that man — yes, of the king!

DON CÆSAR.

You jealous of the king!

RUY BLAS.

Undoubtedly,

Because I love his wife!

DON CÆSAR.

Unhappy one!

RUY BLAS.

Listen: each day I watch to see her pass,
And like a madman am. And oh, the life
Of this poor thing is one long weariness.
Each night I dream of her. Oh, think what 'tis
For her to live in this dull court of hate,
And base hypocrisies,—married to one
Who in the chase spends all his time! A king —
A fool — an imbecile! at thirty years
Already old — and less than man — unfit
Alike to live or reign. And of a race
That's dying off. His father could not hold
A parchment, so debilitated he!
What misery for her, so young and fair,
Thus to be wedded to the second Charles!
Unto the sisters of the Rosary
She goes each eve — thou know'st it — traversing

The Ortaleza street,— I cannot tell
How 'twas this madness grew within my heart,
But judge! She loves a little azure flower
Of Germany — I go each day a league
To Caramanchel, where alone I find
It grows. I have sought for it everywhere.
I pluck the finest, and a posy make.
Oh, but I tell you now these foolish things! —
At midnight like a thief I scale the wall
Around the royal park, and place the flowers
Upon her favourite bench. Even last night
I dared to put a letter 'mid the flowers —
Truly a letter! Brother, pity me!
At night to reach this bank I have to mount
The wall where bristle iron spikes. I know
Some time that I shall leave my flesh thereon.
Now will she find my flowers — my letter too?
I know not — but you see how mad I am.

DON CÉSAR.

It is the devil! Now take care — thy game
Is dang'rous. There's the Count Oñate, he loves
Her also, and keeps guard as Chamberlain
As well as lover. On some night a trooper
Unpitying might despatch you with one blow,
Before your flowers were faded nailing them
Unto your heart. Oh th' idea, I say,
Is quite preposterous — loving thus the queen!
And why? It is a devil's scrape you're in.

RUY BLAS (*with energy*).

Do I not know it! I myself! My soul
Is given over, I would sell it might
I thus become like one of those young Lords
That from this window I behold — who are
A live offence, entering with plumèd hats
And haughty brows. Yes, if I could but break
My chain, and could, as they, approach the queen

In garments not degrading. But — oh! rage,
To thus appear to her, and unto them!
To be for her a lackey! pity me,
Oh God!

[*Approaching DON CÆSAR.*

But I must recollect myself.
Ask'st thou not when and why I loved her thus?
One day — but what's the good of this? 'Tis true
My desperate madness I've made known to thee
And all my thousand tortures made you share,
In showing you my agony — but ask
Not how — or wherefore! only I love her —
Insanely love her, that is all.

DON CÆSAR.

There now,

Don't fret.

RUY BLAS (*pale and overcome, falling into the arm-chair*).

No — no — I suffer — pardon me,

Or rather fly from me, my brother. Go,
And leave the wretched madman who but knows
With horror that beneath the lackey's coat
There rage the passions of a king!

DON CÆSAR (*laying his hand on the shoulder of RUY BLAS*).

Leave thee!

What, I! who have not suffer'd thus because
I have not loved. Like a poor bell am I
Without a clapper — beggar who e'en begs
For love he knows not where. To whom from time
To time fate throws some paltry coin. With heart
Extinguished — drawn within itself, as from
The tatter'd play-bill of the yester night.
Seest thou that for this all absorbing love
I envy quite as much as pity thee!
Oh, Ruy Blas!

[*A moment of silence, while with clasped hands they
look at each other sorrowfully, but with confiding
friendship.*

Enter DON SALLUSTE. He advances softly, looking at DON CÆSAR and RUY BLAS with profound attention, they not perceiving him. In one hand he holds a hat and a sword, which on entering he places on an arm-chair, and in the other a purse which he lays on the table.

DON SALLUSTE (to DON CÆSAR).

Here is the money.

[*At the voice of DON SALLUSTE, RUY BLAS, suddenly aroused, starts up, and with eyes looking down, assumes an attitude of respect.*

DON CÆSAR (*aside, and looking sideways at DON SALLUSTE*).
Ah,

The devil has me! At the door no doubt

The artful one has listened. After all

What matter — Pshaw! (*aloud to DON SALLUSTE*).

Don Salluste, thanks.

[*He opens the purse — spreads the money on the table, handling the ducats delightedly. Then he arranges them in two piles on the velvet cover. While he is counting them, DON SALLUSTE goes to the back, looking behind him to be sure that DON CÆSAR is not observing him. He opens the little door at the right. At a sign from him three Alguazils, armed with swords and dressed in black, appear. DON SALLUSTE points out DON CÆSAR to them in a mysterious manner. RUY BLAS stands upright and motionless as a statue by the table, neither seeing nor hearing anything.*

DON SALLUSTE (*in a low tone to the Alguazils*).

You see

That man who counts the money — follow him

When he goes hence, and seize him silently,

And without violence. And then embark

By shortest way to Denia.

[*He gives them a sealed parchment.*

Here is writ

The order by my hand. And afterwards,
Without attending to his statements, all
Chimerical, you'll sell him on the sea
To corsairs there will be from Africa,
A thousand piastres for you — but be quick.

[The three Alguazils bow and exeunt.]

DON CÆSAR (*finishing the arrangement of his ducats*).
Surely there's nothing more amusing than
To equally divide the crowns that are
One's own.

(*He makes two equal piles, and turns to RUY BLAS*).

Here, brother, is thy share

RUY BLAS.

How — what!

DON CÆSAR (*pointing to one of the heaps of gold*).
Come — take, be free!

DON SALLUSTE (*aside, looking at them from the back*).
The devil!

RUY BLAS (*shaking his head in sign of refusal*).
No — the heart

It is that has to be delivered. No,
My lot is here. I must remain.

DON CÆSAR.

Well — well
Have thine own way. Art thou the crazy one?
And am I wise? God knows.

[He gathers the money into the bag and puts it in his pocket.]

DON SALLUSTE (*from the back, watching them*).
How near alike

They are in mien and face!

DON CÉSAR (*to RUY BLAS*).

Adieu!

RUY BLAS.

Thy hand!

[*They press hands. Exit DON CÉSAR without noticing DON SALLUSTE, who has kept himself apart.*]

SCENE 4.— RUY BLAS. DON SALLUSTE.

DON SALLUSTE.

Ruy Blas!

RUY BLAS (*turning quickly*).
My lord?

DON SALLUSTE.

I am not confident

Whether 'twas fully daylight when you came
This morning — tell me.

RUY BLAS.

Excellency, no,

Not quite. I gave your pass without a word
To the door-keeper, then came up.

DON SALLUSTE.

Wore you

A cloak?

RUY BLAS.

I did, my Lord.

DON SALLUSTE.

In that case then

None in the Castle yet has seen on you
This livery?

RUY BLAS.

Nor person of Madria.

DON SALLUSTE (*pointing to the door by which DON CÆSAR had gone out*).

That's well. Go, close the door. Take off this coat.

[RUY BLAS *takes off his livery-coat and throws it on a chair.*

I think your writing's good. Write now for me.

[*He makes a sign to RUY BLAS to seat himself at the table where there are writing materials.* RUY BLAS *obeys.*

My secretary you must be to-day,
And first a love-letter must write; you see
I nothing hide from you — my queen of love
Is Doña Praxedis — a witch that's come,
I think, from paradise. There — I'll dictate.
“A danger terrible environs me;
My queen alone can stay the tempest's force
By coming to my house this night. If not,
I'm lost. My life, my heart, my reason now
I lay before the feet I kiss.”

[*He laughs, interrupting himself.*
Danger,

A turn well put to draw her on. I am
Expert. Women like much to save just those
Who fool them most. Add now, “Come to the door
That's at the end of the Avenue — at night
You'll not be recognised. And one who is
Devoted will be there to ope the door.”
’Tis perfect, on my word.— Sign now.

RUY BLAS.

Your name,

My Lord?

DON SALLUSTE.

Not so — sign Cæsar. ’Tis the name
In such adventures I adopt.

RUY BLAS (*after having obeyed*).

Unknown

Will be the writing to the lady?

DON SALLUSTE.

Pshaw!

The seal will be enough. Oft thus I write.
I go away at night-fall, Ruy Blas,
And leave you here. I'm planning for you as
A friend sincere. Your state shall change, but then
You must obey me in all things. In you
I've found a servant faithful and discreet.

RUY BLAS (*bowing*).

My Lord!

DON SALLUSTE.

To better your condition here

I wish.

RUY BLAS (*showing the letter he has just written*).

How should the letter be addressed?

DON SALLUSTE.

I will attend to that.

[*Approaching RUY BLAS in a significant manner.*

I wish your good.

[*Silence for a few moments. Then he makes a sign for*

RUY BLAS *to seat himself again at the table.*

Write thus. "I, Ruy Blas, the serving man
Of the most noble Lord the Marquis of
Finlas, engage to serve him faithfully
On all occasions as a servant true
In public or in secrecy." (RUY BLAS *obeys*.)

Now sign

Your name. The date. That's well. Give it to me.

[*He folds and puts into his portfolio the letter and the
paper which RUY BLAS has just written.*

Just now they brought me in a sword.—Ah, there
It is upon the chair.

[*He looks towards the arm-chair on which he had placed*

the sword and hat — goes to it and takes up the sword.

The tie's of silk,

Painted and 'broidered in the newest style —

[He makes RUY BLAS admire it.

Take it. What say you to this foil, Ruy Blas?

The hilt is workmanship of Gil the famed

Engraver, he who chisels out a box

For sweetmeats in a sword's hilt, to amuse

The pretty girls.

[He passes the scarf to which the sword is attached over the shoulders of RUY BLAS.

Now put it on — I want

To see the effect on you. I do declare

You look a noble every inch. (*Listening.*)

They come —

Ah yes, 't is almost time the queen were here —

The Marquis Basto! —

[The door at the end of the corridor opens. DON SALLUSTE unfastens his cloak and hastily throws it over the shoulders of RUY BLAS, just at the moment when the MARQUIS DEL BASTO appears; then he goes up to the MARQUIS, drawing after him RUY BLAS in a stupefied state.

SCENE 5.—DON SALLUSTE, RUY BLAS, DON PAMFILO D'AVALOS, MARQUIS DEL BASTO,—*afterwards the MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, then the COUNT D'ALBE and all the Court.*

DON SALLUSTE (*to the MARQUIS DEL BASTO*).

Let me to your grace

Present my cousin — the Don Cæsar — Count

Of Garofa, near to Velalcazar.

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Oh heav'ns!

DON SALLUSTE (*aside to RUY BLAS*).
Silence!

MARQUIS DEL BASTO (*to RUY BLAS*).
Sir, I am charm'd —
[*He puts out his hand, which RUY BLAS takes in a confused manner.*]

DON SALLUSTE (*in a whisper to RUY BLAS*).
Let be —
Salute him. [RUY BLAS bows to the MARQUIS.]

MARQUIS DEL BASTO (*to RUY BLAS*).
Ah, I loved your mother much.
(*Aside to DON SALLUSTE*).
How changed! I scarcely would have known him.

DON SALLUSTE (*speaking low to the MARQUIS*).
Ah!
Ten years away!

MARQUIS DEL BASTO (*in the same manner*).
Indeed!

DON SALLUSTE (*slapping RUY BLAS on the shoulder*).
At last come back!
You recollect the prodigal he was?
And how he squander'd the pistoles? Each night
A dance or fête — a hundred instruments
Of music on Apollo's fish-pond raged.
Concerts and masquerades, and wildest pranks
Dazzled Madrid with sudden scenes. Ruin'd
In just three years! Truly a lion he.—
He came from India in the galleon.

RUY BLAS (*confused*).
My Lord —

DON SALLUSTE (*gaily*).
Oh, call me cousin — such we are.

We, the Bazans, are an old family,
 Our ancestor was Iniguez d'Iviza;
 His grandson, Pedro de Bazan, was wed
 To Marianne de Gor. Their son was Jean;
 Under king Philip he was admiral.
 Jean had two sons, who on our ancient tree
 Grafted two stocks for blazonry: I am
 The Marquis of Finlas, and you the Count
 Of Garofa, each equal in degree.
 And by the women, Cæsar, 'tis the same.
 'Tis Aragon you claim, I Portugal.
 Your branch as lofty is as ours. I am
 The fruit of one, and of the other you
 The offspring are.

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Where is he dragging me?

[*Whilst DON SALLUSTE was speaking, the MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, DON ALVAR DE BAZAN Y BENAVIDES, an old man with a white moustache and a thick wig was approaching them.*]

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ (*to* DON SALLUSTE).

You make it clear. If he your cousin is
 Mine is he too.

DON SALLUSTE.

True, Marquis — for we come

Of the same stock.

[*He presents RUY BLAS to the MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.*]

Don Cæsar.

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.

I opine

It is not he whom we thought dead?

DON SALLUSTE.

It is.

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.

He has come back then?

DON SALLUSTE.

From the Indies.

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ (*looking at RUY BLAS*).

Ah,

Indeed!

DON SALLUSTE.

You then remember him?

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ.

By Heav'ns,

I recollect his birth.

DON SALLUSTE (*aside to RUY BLAS*).

Half blind he is —

The good man will not own it. 'Tis to prove

His eyes are good he recognizes you.

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ (*extending his hand to RUY BLAS*).

Your hand, my cousin.

RUY BLAS (*bowing*).

My Lord —

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ (*in a low tone to DON SALLUSTE,
and pointing to RUY BLAS*).

He could not look

Better. (*To RUY BLAS.*) Charmed again to see you.

DON SALLUSTE (*in a low tone and taking the MARQUIS
aside*).

His debts

I mean to pay. I think that you can serve him,

In your position, if some place at court

Should vacant be — about the king or queen —

MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ (*in a low tone*).

A charming youth he is; I will not fail

To think of it; for he a kinsman is.

DON SALLUSTE.

At the Castilian council board I know
You're powerful, I recommend him to you.

[*He quits the MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, and goes to other nobles to whom he presents RUY BLAS. Among them is the COUNT D'ALBE very superbly dressed, DON SALLUSTE introduces RUY BLAS to him.*

My cousin, Cæsar, Count of Garofa,
Near to Velalcazar.

[*The nobles gravely exchange bows with RUY BLAS, who is abashed. DON SALLUSTE to the COUNT DE RIBAGORZA.*

You missed last night
The Atalanta ballet? Lindamire
Did dance divinely.

[*He goes into ecstasies at the doublet of the COUNT D'ALBE.*

Count, this is splendid!

COUNT D'ALBE.

Ah, I had one was richer — rose-coloured
Satin with golden braid. Matalobos
Stole it.

AN USHER OF THE COURT (*from the back*).

The Queen is coming. Gentlemen,
Arrange yourselves.

[*The large curtains at the glazed side of the corridor open. The nobles fall into line near the door. The guards line a passage. RUY BLAS, breathless and beside himself, comes to the front as if to take refuge there. DON SALLUSTE follows him.*

DON SALLUSTE (*in a low voice to RUY BLAS*).

Are you not 'shamed that with
Expanding fortunes, thus your heart should shrink?
Awake. I quit Madrid. My little house

Near to the bridge, where you reside, I leave
 For you to use, nothing reserving save
 The secret keys. I leave the mutes with you.
 Some other orders you will soon receive.
 Obey, and I will make your fortune. Rise,
 Fear nothing, for the time is opportune.
 The Court's a territory where one moves
 With little light. Walk you with bandaged eyes.
 I'll see for you, my man!

USHER (*in a loud voice*).

The Queen!

RUY BLAS.

Queen! oh!

[*The QUEEN appears magnificently attired and surrounded by ladies and pages, and under a canopy of scarlet velvet supported by four gentlemen of the chamber bare headed. RUY BLAS, bewildered, gazes as if absorbed by this resplendent vision. All the Grandees of Spain cover, the MARQUIS DEL BASTO, the COUNT D'ALBE, the MARQUIS DE SANTA-CRUZ, DON SALLUSTE. DON SALLUSTE moves rapidly to the arm-chair, takes from it the hat, which he carries to RUY BLAS and puts on his head.*]

DON SALLUSTE.

What giddiness has seized you? Cover now,
 Cæsar, you are grandee of Spain.

RUY BLAS (*absent, low to DON SALLUSTE*).

And next,

My lord, what is 't you order me to do?

DON SALLUSTE (*indicating the QUEEN, who is slowly passing along the corridor*).

To please that woman, and her lover be.

ACT SECOND: THE QUEEN OF SPAIN

A Saloon next to the Queen's bedchamber. At the left a little door opening into that room. At the right, in an angle of the wall, another door opening to the external apartments. At the back large open windows. It is the afternoon of a fine day in summer. The face of a saint richly enshrined is against the wall; beneath it is read, "Holy Mary in Slavery." On the opposite side is a Madonna, before which a golden lamp is burning. Near to the Madonna is a full length portrait of Charles the Second.

At the rising of the curtain the QUEEN DOÑA MARIA OF NEUBOURG is in one corner seated beside one of her ladies, a young and pretty girl. The QUEEN is in a white dress of cloth of silver. She is embroidering, but interrupts herself from time to time to chat. In the opposite corner is seated, in a high-backed chair, the DOÑA JUANA DE LA CUEVA, DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE, first lady of the Chamber, with tapestry in her hand, an old woman in black. Near to the DUCHESS a table where several ladies are engaged in feminine work. At the back stands DON GURITAN COUNT D'OÑATE, the Chamberlain, a tall, thin man of about fifty-five years of age, with grey moustache, looking the old soldier though dressed with exaggerated elegance, wearing ribbons down to his shoes.

SCENE 1.—THE QUEEN, THE DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE,
DON GURITAN, CASILDA, DUENNAS.

THE QUEEN.

He's gone, however! And I ought to be
At ease. Ah well, I am not, though! this man,

The Marquis of Finlas, weighs on my soul,
He hates me so.

CASILDA.

According to your wish
Is he not exiled?

THE QUEEN.

That man hates me.

CASILDA.

Oh

Your majesty ——

THE QUEEN.

'Tis true, Casilda. Strange

This man for me is like an angel bad.
One day —'twas on the morrow he must leave —
He came as usual to kiss hands. The rest,
All the grandees, approach'd the throne in file;
I gave my hand — was sorrowful, and still,
Observing vaguely in the hall's dim light
A battle picture painted on the wall,
When, suddenly it was, my eyes looked down
Near to the table and perceived this man,
So dreaded, was advancing unto me.
Soon as I saw him nothing more I saw.
Slowly he moved, and fingered all the while
His poignard's sheath, so that at times the blade
I saw. Grave was he, yet he dazzled me
With looks of flame. Sudden he bent, and like
A creeping thing —— and then upon my hand
I felt his serpent-mouth!

CASILDA.

He render'd you
His homage;— do not we the same?

THE QUEEN.

His lips
Were not like other lips. 'Twas the last time

I saw him. Often since I've thought of him.
 'Tis true that I have other troubles, yet
 I tell myself that hell is in that soul.
 Only a woman am I to that man.
 In dreams of night I meet again this fiend,
 And feel his frightful kiss upon my hand;
 I see his eyes shine out with hatred's glare;
 And as a deadly poison runs from vein
 To vein, so e'en within my freezing heart
 I feel the shudder of that icy kiss!
 What sayest thou to this?

CASILDA.

Madam, they are

But phantoms!

THE QUEEN.

Ah, indeed — sorrows I know
 That are more real. (*Aside.*) Oh, but I must hide
 That which torments me. (*To CASILDA.*) Those poor
 mendicants
 Who dare not to approach — tell me —

CASILDA (*going to the window*).

Madam,

I know. They still are in the square.

THE QUEEN.

Here then,

Throw them my purse.

[CASILDA *takes the purse and throws it from the window.*]

CASILDA.

Oh Madam, you who give

Your alms so sweetly,

[*Pointing to DON GURITAN who, standing erect and
 silent at the back of the stage, looks at the QUEEN
 with an expression of mute adoration.*]

Will you nothing throw

In pity to the Count Oñate — a word,

Only a word. A brave old man is he,
With love beneath his armour, and a heart
More soft than hard the rind!

THE QUEEN.

So tiresome he!

CASILDA.

I know it. Yet I pray you speak to him.

THE QUEEN (*turning towards DON GURITAN*)

Good day unto you, Count.

[DON GURITAN, *making three bows, approaches the QUEEN, sighing, to kiss her hand, which with an indifferent and absent manner she allows him to do. Afterwards he returns to his place beside the chair of the DUCHESS.*

DON GURITAN (*in retiring to CASILDA*).

How charming is

The Queen to-day!

CASILDA (*looking at him retreating*).

Oh! the poor heron! near

The stream that tempts, he stays. After a day
Of quiet waiting, he but snatches up
A "good day" or "good night," often a dry
Cold word, and goes away delighted with
This little morsel in his beak.

THE QUEEN (*with a sorrowful smile*).

Be still!

CASILDA.

He only needs for happiness to see

The Queen. To see you means delight for him!

[*Looking with ecstasy at a box on a round table.*
Oh, what a lovely box!

THE QUEEN.

I have the key.

CASILDA.

This box of calambac is exquisite.

THE QUEEN (*giving her the key*).

Now open it and see. I've had it fill'd,
My dear, with relics, and 'tis my intent
To send it on to Neubourg — well I know
My father will be greatly pleased with it.

[*She muses for a moment. Then suddenly forces herself out of her reverie.*

I will not think! That which is in my mind
I wish to drive from it. (*To CASILDA.*) Go to my room
And fetch me thence a book.—— What foolishness!
I don't possess a German book! they all
Are Spanish! And the king is at the chase;
Always away. What weariness! Near him,
In six months, I have only pass'd twelve days.

CASILDA.

Who'd wed a king if she must live this way!

[*The QUEEN again falls into reverie — and again rouses herself by a violent effort.*

THE QUEEN.

I wish to go out now.

[*At these words, pronounced imperiously by the QUEEN, the DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE, who till this moment had remained motionless in her chair, lifts up her head, then rising makes a low curtsey to the QUEEN.*

DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE (*in a hard, curt manner*).

It needs before

The Queen goes out — it is the rule — that all
The doors should opened be by some grandee
Of Spain who has the right to bear the keys;
Now at this hour not one of them remains
Within the palace,

THE QUEEN.

Then you shut me up!
Duchess, in short, they wish that I should die!

THE DUCHESS (*with another curtsey*).
I am duenna of the chamber, so
I must fulfil my duty (*reseats herself*).

THE QUEEN (*lifting her hands to her head despairingly, aside*).

Well, then, now
To dream again! But no! (*Aloud.*) Ladies, be quick!
A table — let us play at lansquenet!

THE DUCHESS (*to the ladies*).
Ladies, stir not (*rising and curtseying to the QUEEN*). Your
Majesty cannot,
According to the ancient law, play cards,
Except with kings or with their relatives.

THE QUEEN (*with an air of command*).
Well, then, go bring to me these relatives.

CASILDA (*looking at the DUCHESS*).
Oh this duenna!

THE DUCHESS (*making the sign of the Cross*).
To the King who reigns
God has not given, Madam, any kin.
The Queen his mother's dead. He's now alone.

THE QUEEN.
Let them, then, serve me a collation.

CASILDA.
Yes,
That were amusing.

THE QUEEN.
I invite you now
To it, Casilda.

CASILDA (*aside, looking at the DUCHESS*).

Oh, you proper — prim

Old grandmother!

THE DUCHESS (*making a reverence*).

When absent is the King,

The Queen eats quite alone (*re-seats herself*).

THE QUEEN (*her patience at an end*).

Oh God! what is 't

That I can do? Not take fresh air, nor play

A game, nor even eat at mine own will!

Most truly I've been dying all the year

That I've been Queen.

CASILDA (*aside, looking at her with compassion*).

Oh the poor woman! thus

To pass her days in weariness in this

Insipid Court! with no distraction, save

To see at border of this sleepy swamp

(*looking at DON GURITAN*)

An old, but love-sick Count, that stands upon

One leg to dream.

THE QUEEN (*to CASILDA*).

Think now of something; say,

What shall we do?

CASILDA.

Ah, hold! The King away,

'Tis you who rule. Just for amusement's sake

Summon the Ministers.

THE QUEEN (*shrugging her shoulders*).

A pleasure that!

To see eight gloomy countenances ranged

For talk with me concerning France, and its

Declining king, of Rome,— they'd also tell

About the portrait of the Archduke which

They bear about at Burgos, 'mid the show

Of cavalcades, beneath a canopy
Of cloth of gold upheld by four Alcaids!
Oh, think of something else!

CASILDA.

Well, now, 'twould be

Amusing if some youthful equerry
I made come up.

THE QUEEN.

Casilda!

CASILDA.

Oh, I want
So much to look at some young man. Madam,
This venerable Count is death to me.
I think that through the eyes old age comes on,
That we, by always looking at the old,
Ourselves age all the sooner.

THE QUEEN.

Foolishness!

There comes a time the heart asserts itself.
As it wakes up from sleep, it loses joy.

(*Thoughtfully.*)

My only happiness — ah, that is in
The corner of the park, where I'm allowed
To go alone.

CASILDA.

Fine happiness, indeed!
A charming place! where snares are set behind
The marble forms — and where one nothing views.
The walls around are higher than the trees.

THE QUEEN.

Oh, how I wish I could go out sometimes!

CASILDA (*in a low voice*).

Go out? Well, Madam, listen. Let us, though,
Speak softly. In such a prison's gloomy shade

Nought is there so worth search and finding as
One precious sparkling jewel that is called
The key o' the fields. I have it! And when'er
You wish, in spite of foes, I'll let you out
At night, and through the town we both can go.

THE QUEEN.

Heavens! never! Silence!

CASILDA.

'Tis quite easy.

THE QUEEN.

Peace!

*(She draws a little away from CASILDA, and falls into
reverie).*

Oh would that I, who fear the grandes here,
Were still in my good Germany, beside
My parents, as when with my sister dear
I rambled freely through the fields; and when
We met the peasants trailing their rich sheaves,
We talked to them. 'Twas charming. But alas!
One night a man arrived who said — and he
Was dressed in black, I holding by the hand
My sister, sweet companion — “Madam, you
Are to be Queen of Spain.” — My father was
All joyous, but my mother wept. Now they
Both weep. — I mean to send in secret soon
This box unto my father, he'll be pleased.
See you how everything disheartens me.
My birds from Germany all died.

[CASILDA looks across to the DUCHESS, and makes a sign
of wringing the birds' necks.

And then

They would not let me have the flowers that grew
In mine own country. Never on mine ear
Doth vibrate now a word of love. A Queen
I am to-day. But formerly I knew

What freedom was. Truly thou say'st this park
At eve is dreary — with its walls so high,
One cannot see beyond.— Oh weariness!

[Singing afar off is heard.]

What is that sound?

CASILDA.

The laundrywomen, they
Are singing, as they pass the heather through.

*[The singers approach. The words are heard. The
QUEEN listens eagerly.]*

SONG FROM OUTSIDE.

Why should we listen
To birds that rejoice?
The bird the most tender
Sings now in thy voice.

Let God show or veil
The stars in the skies,
The purest of stars
Shines now in thine eyes.

Let April renew
All the blossoms around,
The loveliest flower
In thy heart will be found.

The passionate bird song,
The day star above,
And the flower of the soul
But call themselves love!

THE QUEEN (*musings*).

Love — love! Ah, they are happy! And their song,
Their voices, do me harm as well as good.

THE DUCHESS (*to the ladies*).

These women with their song annoy the Queen,
Drive them away!

THE QUEEN (*eagerly*).

How, Madam! scarcely can
I hear them; 'tis my will that they, poor things,
Should pass in peace.

(*To CASILDA, pointing to a casement at the back.*)

The trees are here less thick,
This window opens to the country; come
Let us now try to look at them.

[*She goes towards the window with CASILDA.*]

THE DUCHESS (*rising and curtsying*).

Spain's Queen

Must not look out of window.

THE QUEEN (*stopping and retracing her steps*).

Oh, what next!

The lovely sunset filling all the vales,
The golden dust of evening rising o'er
The way, the far-off songs to which all ears
May listen,—these for me exist no more,
Unto the world I've said adieu. Not e'en
May I regard the nature made by God!
E'en others' freedom I may not behold!

THE DUCHESS (*making signs to the assistants to leave*).
Go now. To day is sacred to the Saints,
Th' Apostles.

[*CASILDA goes towards the door. The QUEEN stops her.*]

THE QUEEN.

What! You leave me?

CASILDA (*pointing to the DUCHESS*).

Madam, we

Are ordered out.

THE DUCHESS (*curtsying to the ground*).

'Tis right that we the Queen

To her devotions leave.

[*All go out with profound reverence.*]

SCENE 2.

THE QUEEN (*alone*).

To her devotions?

Say rather to her thoughts! How can I flee
Now from them? All have left me, and alone
I am, poor soul, without a torch to light
My dusky way! (*Musing.*) That bleeding hand whose
print

Was on the wall! Oh God, and could it be
That he was hurt? If so it was his fault.
Why would he climb the wall so high? And all
To bring me flowers which they refuse me here;
For such a little thing to venture thus!
Doubtless his wounds were from the iron spikes —
A scrap of lace hung there. A drop of blood
Shed for me claims my tears. (*Losing herself in reverie.*)

Each time I go

Unto to the bench, to seek the flowers, I say
To God — whose help forsakes me — that I will
No more return. And yet I still go back.—
But he! Behold three days have pass'd and he
Has not been there.— And wounded! — Oh, young man,
Unknown, whoever thou may'st be, who thus
Dost see me lonely, and afar from them
Who cherish'd me, who without recompense,
Or even hope of aught, comes to me thus
'Mid perils never counted — thou who shed'st
Thy blood, and risk'st thy life to give a flower
Unto the Queen of Spain, whoever thou
May'st be — the friend whose shadow follows me —
Since unto law inflexible my heart
Submits, may'st thou be by thy mother loved,
And bless'd by me!

[*Energetically, and pressing her hand on her heart.*

But oh, his letter burns!

(*Falling again into reverie.*)

And he that other! the implacable
Don Salluste! I by destiny am now
Afflicted and protected too. At once
An angel follows me, and spectre dread.
And without seeing them I feel a stir
Amid the gloom that is perchance about
Moments supreme to bring, in which a man
Who hates me will come near to him who loves.
Shall I by one be from the other saved?
I know not. Oh my fate seems but the sport
Of two opposing winds. To be a Queen
How weak and poor a thing! Ah, I will pray.

(She kneels before the Madonna.)

Oh Blessèd Lady help me! For mine eyes
I dare not raise to look on you! *(She interrupts herself.)*
Oh God!

The lace, the letter, and the flowers are fire!

[She puts her hand to her bosom and takes out a crumpled letter, some little dried blue flowers, and a morsel of lace stained with blood which she throws on the table; then she again kneels.]

Oh Virgin, thou the star o' the sea! the hope
Of martyrs! help me now! *(Interrupting herself.)* That
letter!

[Turns half round to the table.
Ah!

'Tis that distracts me. *(She kneels again.)* Not again I'll
read

The letter. Queen of sweet compassion! you
Who wert bestowed on all afflicted souls
For sister! Come, I call you!

[She rises, advances towards the table, then pauses, but at last grasps the letter as if yielding to an irresistible impulse.]

Yes, I will

Re-read it one last time, and after that
Destroy it. *(With a sad smile.)* For a month, alas! 'tis this

I've said! *[She unfolds the letter resolutely and reads.*

“Madam, in dull obscurity
Beneath your feet, and hidden in the shade,
A man there is who loves you! he the worm
That suffers, loving thus a star; who would
For you give up his soul, if so must be;
And who lies depths below, while you must shine
On high.” *[She places the letter on the table.*

When souls are thirsty they must drink,
Though it be poison!

[She puts the letter and the lace in her bosom.

Nought on earth have I.

Ah, but I need some one to love. The King
I would have truly loved, had he so will'd it.
But me he leaves alone, of love bereft.

[The great folding doors open. An USHER of the Chamber in full dress enters.

THE USHER *(in a loud voice).*

A letter from the King!

THE QUEEN *(as if suddenly awakened, with a joyful cry).*
From him! I'm saved!

SCENE 3.—THE QUEEN, THE DUCHESS D'ALBUQUERQUE,
CASILDA, DON GURITAN, Ladies in Waiting, Pages, RUY
BLAS.

All enter with solemnity, the DUCHESS at their head, followed by the women. RUY BLAS remains at the back of the chamber. He is magnificently dressed. His cloak falls over his left arm and hides it. Two pages, carrying the KING's letter on a cushion of cloth of gold, kneel before the QUEEN at a few paces distant.

RUY BLAS *(at the back — aside).*

Where am I now? — How beautiful she is!
Oh, for what purpose am I here?

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

'Tis aid

From heaven! (*Aloud.*) Give it me — be quick![*Turning to the portrait of the KING.*

My thanks

Your majesty! (*To the DUCHESS.*) Whence comes this
letter, say?

THE DUCHESS.

From Aranjuez, Madam, where the King

Now hunts.

THE QUEEN.

And from my soul I thank him. He

Has understood my need of words of love

From him, in my lone weariness. Come then,

Now give it me.

THE DUCHESS (*curtseying and pointing to the letter*).

I must inform you that

The custom is, that whatso'er it be

I first must open it and read.

THE QUEEN.

Again! —

Ah well, then read.

[*The DUCHESS takes the letter and slowly unfolds it.*

CASILDA.

Let's hear the lines of love.

THE DUCHESS (*reading*).

“Madam, the wind is high, and I have killed

Six wolves. Signed, Charles.”

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

Alas!

DON GURITAN (*to the DUCHESS*).

And is that all?

THE DUCHESS.

Yes, Count.

CASILDA (*aside*).

Six wolves he's killed! How this excites
Th' imagination! Tender is your heart,
Exacting, weary, sick. Six wolves he's killed!

THE DUCHESS (*to the QUEEN, presenting the letter to her*).
If that your Majesty? —

THE QUEEN (*pushing it away*).
Oh no.

CASILDA (*to the DUCHESS*).
And this

Is really all?

THE DUCHESS.

Undoubtedly. What more
Should be? Our king is hunting; on the way
He writes declaring all he's killed, and states
The weather he has had. All this is well.

[*Examining the letter again.*

He writes — ah no, he dictates.

THE QUEEN (*snatching the letter and examining it herself*).
Then, in short,

'Tis not his hand, only his signature.

[*She examines it with more attention, and seems struck
with stupor. (Aside.)*

Is it delusion? the hand writing's just

The same as that o' the letter!

[*She indicates with her hand the letter she has just
hidden in her bosom.*

Oh, what's this?

(*To the DUCHESS.*)

Who, then, conveyed the letter?

THE DUCHESS (*pointing to RUY BLAS*).
He is there.

THE QUEEN (*half turning towards RUY BLAS*).
That young man?

THE DUCHESS.

'Twas he himself who brought it.

He's a new equerry his Majesty
Has given to the Queen. A noble whom,
As from the King, my Lord of Santa Cruz
Has introduced to me.

THE QUEEN.

His name?

THE DUCHESS.

He is

The noble Cæsar de Bazan — the Count
Of Garofa. If rumour be believed
He is the most accomplish'd gentleman
That can be found.

THE QUEEN.

That's well. I'll speak to him.

(To RUY BLAS.)

Sir —

RUY BLAS (*aside, trembling*).

Ah, she sees — she speaks to me. Oh God!

I tremble.

THE DUCHESS (*to RUY BLAS*).

Count, approach.

DON GURITAN (*aside, and looking sideways at RUY BLAS*).

I did not dream

Of this,— that young man! he an equerry!

[RUY BLAS, *pale and troubled, slowly advances*.

THE QUEEN.

You come from Aranjuez?

RUY BLAS.

Yes, Madam.

THE QUEEN.

The king is well?

[RUY BLAS bows, she points to the royal letter.
This letter was by him

Dictated?

RUY BLAS.

He on horseback was when he

[*Hesitates a moment.*

To one of his attendants did the lines
Dictate.

THE QUEEN (*aside, looking at RUY BLAS*).

His looks so pierce me that I dare

Not ask to whom. (*Aloud.*) 'Tis well, you may depart.
Ah! —

[RUY BLAS, who had stepped back a few paces, turns
again towards the QUEEN.

Many nobles were assembled there? (*Aside.*)

Why am I stirr'd on seeing this young man?

[RUY BLAS bows, and she continues.

Who were they?

RUY BLAS.

Names I do not know. I was

But there a few short moments, for Madrid
I quitted but three days ago.

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

Three days!

[*She looks at RUY BLAS with a troubled expression.*

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Another's wife! Oh frightful jealousy!

Of whom? A gulf has opened in my heart.

DON GURITAN (*approaching RUY BLAS*).

You are an equerry unto the Queen.

One word with you. Know you your duty? You

To-night must in the next room stay to be

In readiness to open to the king

Should he arrive.

RUY BLAS (*trembling, aside*).

I open to the king!

(*Aloud.*)

But —— he is absent now.

DON GURITAN.

Yet may he not,

Though unexpectedly, return?

RUY BLAS (*aside*)

Ah — how!

DON GURITAN (*aside, observing RUY BLAS*).

What ails him?

THE QUEEN (*who has heard all and is looking at RUY BLAS*).

Oh, how pale he grows!

[RUY BLAS, tottering, leans his arm on a great chair.

CASILDA (*to the QUEEN*).

Madam,

This young man's ill!

RUY BLAS (*supporting himself with difficulty*).

I — I — oh, no! But strange

It is, how that — the sun — fresh air — the length

Of road —— (*Aside.*) To open to the King!

[*He falls fainting on to the arm-chair. His cloak slips aside and shows his left hand to be bound up in blood-stained linen.*

CASILDA.

Great God,

He's wounded, Madam, in the hand!

THE QUEEN.

A wound!

CASILDA.

He's losing consciousness! Quick, make him breathe,
Some essence.

THE QUEEN (*feeling in her ruff*).

Here's a flask of mine contains

An extract.

[*At this moment her glance falls on the ruffle RUY BLAS wears on his right arm. Aside.*

'Tis the self same lace!

[*When she took the flask from her bosom, she in her trouble drew out the morsel of lace which was hidden there. RUY BLAS, whose eyes were fixed on her, saw and recognized it.*

RUY BLAS (*distracted*).

Oh — oh!

[*The eyes of the QUEEN and RUY BLAS meet. Silence.*

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

'Tis he!

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Upon her heart!

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

'Tis he!

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Grant God

That now I die!

[*In the confusion of the women pressing round RUY BLAS, no one had remarked what passed between the QUEEN and him.*

CASILDA (*holding the flask for RUY BLAS to inhale from*).

How were you injured, say?

Was it just now? Ah no! The wound I see
Must have re-opened on the way. And why,
How happened it, that you were made to bear
The message from the King?

THE QUEEN.

I hope that soon

You'll finish questioning.

THE DUCHESS (*to CASILDA*).

What's this, my dear,

Unto the Queen?

THE QUEEN.

Since it was he who wrote

The letter, it was well he brought it me,

Was it not so?

CASILDA.

But he has never said

He wrote it.

THE QUEEN (*aside*).

Oh! (*To CASILDA*.) Be still!

CASILDA (*to RUY BLAS*).

How is your Grace?

Are you now better?

RUY BLAS.

I am restored!

THE QUEEN (*to the Ladies*).

'Tis time

That we retire. To his apartments let

The Count be led. (*To the Pages at the back*.)

You know the King will not

Come back to-night. He will remain away

Through all the hunting season.

[*She retires with her attendants to her apartments.*]

CASILDA (*watching her go out*).

Ah, the Queen

Has something on her mind.

[*She goes out by the same door as the QUEEN, carrying the little casket of relics.*]

RUY BLAS (*remains alone*).

[*He seems as if listening for some time with deep joy to the last words of the QUEEN, and lost in reverie. The morsel of lace which the QUEEN had let fall in her trouble had remained on the ground. He picks*

it up, looks at it with emotion, and covers it with kisses. Then he raises his eyes to heaven.

Mercy, oh God!

Make me not mad!

(Looking at the morsel of lace).

'Twas surely near her heart!

[*He hides it in his bosom.— Enter DON GURITAN by the door of the room into which he had followed the QUEEN. He walks slowly towards RUY BLAS. When close to him, he, without saying a word, half-draws his sword, and compares its appearance with that of RUY BLAS'. They are not alike. He puts back his sword into the scabbard. RUY BLAS looks at him with surprise.*

SCENE 4.— RUY BLAS — DON GURITAN.

DON GURITAN *(again pushing back his sword)*.
I will bring two that are of equal length.

RUY BLAS.

What mean you, Sir —

DON GURITAN *(gravely)*.

I was most deep in love
In sixteen hundred and fifty. Then I dwelt
In Alicante. There a young man was,
As handsome as the loves; he looked too near
Upon my mistress, passing every day
Beneath her balcony, before the old
Cathedral; he was prouder than a Captain
Of an Admiral's ship; Vasquez his name, and though
Bastard he was ennobled. Him I killed.

[RUY BLAS *tries to interrupt him; but DON GURITAN prevents him by a gesture, and continues.*
And after that — it was towards sixty-six —
Gil, Count of Iscola,— a splendid knight,

Sent to my beauty, named Angelica,
A loving letter which she showed, and a slave
Named Grifel of Viserta. Him I had
Despatched, and slew myself the master.

RUY BLAS.

Sir!

DON GURITAN (*continuing*).

And later — near the year eighty — I had cause
To think I was deceived by beauty, one
Of easy ways, through Tirso Gamonal,
One of those youths whose haughty faces charm,
And go so well with splendid feathers. 'Twas
The time when mules were shod with purest gold.
I slew Don Tirso Gamonal.

RUY BLAS.

But what,

Sir, means all this?

DON GURITAN.

It means to show you, Count,
That if you draw, there's water in the well,
And that to-morrow morn the sun will rise
At four o'clock; that there's a lonely spot
Behind the chapel, far from any road,
Convenient for men of spirit. You
They call Cæsar, I am named Don Gaspar
Guritan Tassis y Guevarra, Count
Of Oñate.

RUY BLAS (*coldly*).

Well, Sir, I will be there.

[*A few moments before, CASILDA, out of curiosity, had entered softly by the little door at the back, and had listened to the last words without having been seen by the speakers.*

CASILDA (*aside*).

A duel! I must tell the Queen.

[*She disappears by the little door.*]

DON GURITAN (*still imperturbable*).

If, Sir,

It pleases you to study and to know
My tastes, for your instruction I will say
I never much admired a coxcomb, or
A ladies' man with curled moustache, on whom
The women like to look, who sometimes are
All lackadaisical, and sometimes gay.
Who in the house speak with their eyes, and fall
In charming attitudes upon arm-chairs,
Just fainting at some little scratches.

RUY BLAS.

But

I do not understand.

DON GURITAN.

You understand

Quite well. We both desire the same good things,
And in this palace one of us is one
Too many. You are equerry, in short,
And I the Chamberlain. And so our rights
Are equal. I am ill-provided, though.
Our shares are not the same. I have the right
Of age, and you of youth. This frightens me.
At table where I fast, I see sit down
A hungry youth, with strong terrific teeth
And flaming eyes, and air of conqueror;
This troubles me; for vain contention were
Upon love's territory — that fine field,
Which always trembles with mere trifles,— I
Should make th' assault but badly. I've the gout.
Besides, I am not such an arrant fool
As for the heart of a Penelope

To wrestle with a spark so prompt to faint.
Because you're handsome, tender, winning, 'tis
That I must kill you.

RUY BLAS.

Well, then, pray try.

DON GURITAN.

Count

Of Garofa, to-morrow morn at hour
Of sunrise, at the place that's named, without
A servant or a witness, if you please,
We'll slaughter one another gallantly,
With sword and dagger, like true gentlemen
Of houses such as ours.

[He extends his hand to RUY BLAS, who takes it.]

RUY BLAS.

No word of this?

(The COUNT makes a sign of assent.)

Until to-morrow.

[Exit RUY BLAS.]

DON GURITAN *(alone)*.

No — no tremor in

His hand I found. To know he'll surely die,
And be thus calm, proves him to be a brave
Young fellow.

[Noise of a key in the little door of the QUEEN's room.]

Some one surely's at that door?

[The QUEEN appears and walks briskly towards DON GURITAN, who is surprised and delighted to see her. She holds the little casket in her hands.]

SCENE 5.— DON GURITAN — THE QUEEN.

THE QUEEN *(smiling)*.

'Twas you I sought to find!

DON GURITAN.

What brings to me

This honour?

THE QUEEN (*placing the casket on the round table*).

Oh, 'tis nothing — or, at least,
A small affair, my Lord (*she laughs*). Just now 'twas said,
'Mong other things — you know how foolish are
The women — and Casilda said, maintained
That you, for me, aught that I asked would do.

DON GURITAN.

And she was right.

THE QUEEN (*laughing*).

But I the contrary

Declared.

DON GURITAN.

Then, Madam, you were wrong.

THE QUEEN.

She said

That you for me would give your soul — your life —

DON GURITAN.

Casilda spoke right well in saying that.

THE QUEEN.

But I said No.

DON GURITAN.

And I say yes, all things
I for your Majesty would do.

THE QUEEN.

All things?

DON GURITAN.

Yes all.

THE QUEEN.

Well let us see! — swear now that you

To please me will this instant do the thing
I ask you.

DON GURITAN.

By the venerated King
My patron saint, King Gaspar, I do swear!
Command, and I obey or die!

THE QUEEN (*taking up the casket*).

Well then,

You will set out and leave Madrid at once,
And carry straight this box of calambac
To Neubourg, to my father th' Elector.
Take it.

DON GURITAN (*aside*).

I'm caught, indeed! (*Aloud*). What! to Neubourg!

THE QUEEN.

To Neubourg.

DON GURITAN.

Ah! six hundred leagues from here!

THE QUEEN.

Five hundred 'tis and fifty,—

[*pointing to the silken cover of the box.*

Pray take care

That on the road the blue fringe does not fade.

DON GURITAN.

When shall I start?

THE QUEEN.

This instant.

DON GURITAN.

Let it be

To-morrow!

THE QUEEN.

No, I cannot yield.

DON GURITAN (*aside*).
Entrapp'd

I am. (*Aloud*). But —

THE QUEEN.
Now set off.

DON GURITAN.
But why is this? —

THE QUEEN.
You've promised me.

DON GURITAN.
Affairs —

THE QUEEN.
Impossible.

DON GURITAN.
The object is so frivolous —

THE QUEEN.
Be quick!

DON GURITAN.
One day alone!

THE QUEEN.
No, not a moment.

DON GURITAN.
For —

THE QUEEN.
Now do my bidding.

DON GURITAN.
I —

THE QUEEN.
No.

DON GURITAN.

But —

THE QUEEN.

Set off.

DON GURITAN.

If — if —

THE QUEEN.

Yes, I will kiss you!

[She puts her arms round his neck and kisses him.]

DON GURITAN (*vexed and yet delighted*).

I resist

No more. I will obey you, Madam. (*Aside.*) God

Made Himself man; so be't. As woman 'tis

The devil comes!

THE QUEEN (*pointing to the window*).

A carriage there below

Is waiting for you.

DON GURITAN.

All then is prepared!

[He writes hurriedly a few words on a piece of paper and rings a little bell. A Page enters.]

Page, take unto Don Cæsar de Bazan

This letter, and without one moment lost.

(*Aside.*)

This duel must be taken up again

When I return. I shall come back! (*Aloud.*) I go

At once to satisfy your Majesty.

THE QUEEN.

Now I'm contented.

[He takes the casket, kisses the QUEEN'S hand, makes a low bow and exit. The next minute the sound of wheels is heard.]

THE QUEEN (*falling into a chair*).

He shall not be kill'd!

ACT THIRD: RUY BLAS

The Council Chamber of the KING's palace at Madrid. At the back of a large door above some steps. In the angle to the left an opening closed by tapestry of a raised warp. In the opposite angle a window. To the right a square table with a green velvet cover around which are placed stools for eight or ten persons, corresponding to the number of desks placed on the table. At the side of the table which faces the audience is a large arm-chair, covered with cloth of gold, and surmounted by a canopy of the same material, with the arms of Spain and the royal crown emblazoned. A chair at one side of it. When the curtain rises the Privy Council of the KING is about to sit.

SCENE 1.—DON MANUEL ARIAS, PRESIDENT OF CASTILE; DON PEDRO VELEZ DE GUEVARRA, COUNT DE CAMPOREAL, *Knight-Counsellor of the Chief Exchequer.* DON FERNANDO DE CORDOVA Y AGUILAR MARQUIS DE PRIEGO of the same quality. ANTONIO UBILLA, *Chief Secretary of the Revenue.* MONTAZGO, *Counsellor of the Black Robe for India.* COVADENGA, *Chief Secretary for the Isles.* Many other Counsellors. Those of the Robe in black. The others in Court Dress. CAMPOREAL has the Cross of Calatrava on his mantle, PRIEGO the Golden Fleece at his neck. DON MANUEL ARIAS, President of Castile, and the COUNT DE CAMPOREAL chat together in low tones at the front. The others form groups here and there in the Hall.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

Behind such fortune lurks a mystery.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

He has the Golden Fleece. Behold him made
Chief secretary — minister — and now
Duke d'Olmedo he is!

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

All in six months.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

In some strange secret way he has been raised.

DON MANUEL ARIAS (*mysteriously*).

The Queen!

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

In fact, the king an invalid,
Insane at heart, lives at his first wife's tomb.
He abdicates the throne, shut up within
Th' Escorial, and leaves the Queen alone
To govern all things.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

Dear Camporeal,

She reigns o'er us — Don Cæsar over her.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

His way of life is quite unnatural.
In the first place, he never sees the Queen;
They seem to shun each other. You may doubt
My word, but for six months I've watched them well,
For reasons good, and of it I am sure.
Then, from morose caprice, his dwelling is
A little lodge that's near th' Hôtel Tormez,
With shutters ever closed — where negroes two
Guard well the close-shut doors — Lackeys who could
Tell much, if only that they were not dumb.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

Mutes, then?

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

Yes, mutes. His other servitors

Remain in those apartments which he has
Within the palace.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

It is strange, indeed.

DON ANTONIO UBILLA (*who joined them a few moments before*).

He comes of an old family,—enough
That is.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

The strange thing seems that he pretends
To be an honest man.

(*To DON MANUEL ARIAS.*)

Cousin he is

Unto the Marquis Salluste, who last year
Was banished — therefore 'twas that Santa Cruz
Befriended him.— In former years, this man,
Don Cæsar, who to-day our master proves,
Seemed but the greatest fool the moon saw born —
A hare-brained dolt — we know the people well
Who knew him. He for revenue consumed
His fortune — changed his loves, his carriages
Each day. His fancies had ferocious teeth,
That could have eaten in a year Peru.
One day he ran away, 'twas not known where.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

But time has made of this gay fool a sage
Severe.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL.

Frail women prudish grow when aged.

UBILLA.

I think the man is honest.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL (*laughing*).

Simpleton,

Ubilla! to be dazzled thus by such

A probity! (*in a significant tone*). The household of the Queen,
Civil and ordinary (*looking at some papers*), almost costs
Seven hundred thousand golden ducats now
In yearly charges. Here's assuredly
A shady calm Pactolus, where one might
In safety throw a very certain net;
The water trouble, and the fish is there.

MARQUIS DE PRIEGO (*coming forward*).
Ah, that does not displease you. But unwise
Are you to speak thus freely. Let me say,
My late grandfather, he who was brought up
With the Count-Duke, did oft advise that we
Should gnaw the king — but kiss the favourite.
Now let us, gentlemen, engage ourselves
With public business.

[*They sit round the table; some take up pens, others turn over the papers. The remainder are idle. A brief silence.*]

MONTAZGO (*whispering to UBILLA*).
I have asked from you,
Out of the money meant for purchasing
Of relics, just a sum enough to buy
The post of Alcaid that my nephew wants.

UBILLA (*whispering*).
You — you — you said you'd shortly give the place
Of bailiff o' the Ebro to my cousin
Melchior of Elva.

MONTAZGO (*exclaiming*).
Only just now
We dowered your daughter. The festivities
O' the nuptials still proceed.— Without a pause
I am assailed. . . .

UBILLA (*whispering*).
The Alcaid's post is yours.

MONTAZGO (*whispering*).

And yours the bailiff's.

[*They press hands.*]

COVADENGA (*rising*).

Gentlemen, we are

Castilian counsellors, and needful 'tis,
In order that each keeps within his sphere,
To regulate our rights and take our shares.
The revenue of Spain is scatter'd when
A hundred hands control it. We need now
To end this public evil. Some acquire
Too much, the others do not have enough.
The farming of tobacco goes to you,
Ubilla. Indigo and musk belong
To Marquis de Priego. Camporeal
Receives the taxes of eight thousand men,
The import dues, the salt, a thousand sums,
And five per cent. on gold, on jet, and on
The amber.

(*To MONTAZGO.*)

You who with a restless eye
Regard me, you have managed for yourself
To have the tax on arsenic, and the rights
Of snow. You have dry docks, and cards, and brass,
The ransoms of the citizens that should
Be punished with the stick — the ocean tithes,
And those on lead and rosewood. Nothing, Sirs,
Have I. Decree me something.

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL (*bursting out laughing*).

Oh, the old

Devil! Of all he takes the largest share
Of profits. If the Indies we except,
He has the islands of both seas. What spread
Of wings! He holds Majorca in one claw,
And with the clutches Teneriffe!

COVADENGA (*growing angry*).

I say I've nothing!

MARQUIS DE PRIEGO (*laughing*).

He the negroes has.

[*They rise, all speaking at once and quarrelling.*]

MONTAZGO.

I should long since have made complaint. I want
The forests.

COVADENGA (*to the MARQUIS DE PRIEGO*).

Let me have the arsenic, then

The negroes unto you I will give up.

[*A few moments before RUY BLAS had entered by the door at the back, and had witnessed this scene without having been observed by the speakers. He is dressed in black velvet, with a mantle of scarlet velvet; he has a white feather in his hat, and wears the Golden Fleece at his neck. At first he listened to them in silence, but suddenly he advances with soft steps and appears in their midst at the height of the quarrel.*]

SCENE 2.—THE SAME — RUY BLAS.

RUY BLAS (*bursting on them*).

I wish you joy!

[*All turn round. Silence of surprise and uneasiness.*]

RUY BLAS *puts on his hat, crosses his arms, and continues looking them full in the face.*

Oh faithful ministers!

And virtuous counsellors! Behold your mode
Of working, servants you who rob the house!
And without shame the dark hour choose, when Spain
Weeps in her agony! — caring for nought
Except to fill your pockets — afterwards
To flee away! Branded you are before

Your country sinking into ruin. Oh,
Her grave you've dug, and robbed her in it too.
But look — reflect — and have some shame. The worth
Of Spain, her virtue and her greatness pass
Away. Since the Fourth Philip's time we've lost
Not only Portugal and the Brazils
Without a struggle made, but in Alsace
Brisach, Steinfort in Luxembourg, and all
The Comté to its last small town; Rousillon,
Ormuz and Goa, five thousand leagues of coast
And Pernambuc, and the blue mountains' range.
But see — from western shores unto the east
Europe, which hates you, laughs at you as well.
As if your King a phantom only were,
Holland and England share his states, and Rome
Deceives you; half an army is the most
You dare to risk in Piedmont; though supposed
A friendly country, Savoy and its Duke
Abound in subtle dangers. France awaits
The hour propitious to attack and take.
And Austria also watches you. And then
Bavaria's Prince is dying — that you know.
As for your viceroys — your Medina, fool
Of love, fills Naples with such tales as are
A scandal; Milan's sold by Vaudémont,
Legañez loses Flanders. What for this
The remedy? The state is indigent,
The state is drained of troops and money both.
Upon the sea — where God his anger shows —
We have already lost three hundred ships
Without our counting galleys. And you dare! —
Ye Sirs, for twenty years the People — think
Of it — and I have reckoned it is thus —
Have borne the burden under which they bend
For you — your pleasures and your mistresses; —
The wretched people whom you still would grind,
Have sweated for your uses, this I say,

More than four hundred millions of their gold!
And this is not enough for you! and still
My masters!—— Ah, I am ashamed! At home
The spoilers, troopers, traverse all the land
And fight, the harvest burning. Carbines too
Are pointed at each thicket, just as 'twere
The war of princes; war is there between
The convents, war between the provinces,
All seeking to devour their neighbours poor,
Eaters o' the famished on a vessel wreck'd!
Within your ruined churches grows the grass,
And they are full of adders. Many great
By ancestry, but workers none. Intrigue
Is all, and nothing springs from loyalty.
A sewer is Spain, to which th' impurity
Of all the nations drains.— In his own pay
Each noble has a hundred cut-throats, who
Do speak a hundred tongues. The Genoese,
Sardinian, Flemish.— Babel's in Madrid.
The magistrates, so stern to poverty,
Are lenient to the rich. When night comes on
There's murder, then each one cries out for help!
But yesterday they robb'd me, yes, myself,
Near the Toledo bridge. One half Madrid
Now robs the other half, judges are bribed,
No soldier gets his pay. Old conquerors
O' the world — the Spaniards that we are — see now
What army have we? It but barely shows
Six thousand men who barefoot go; a host
Made up of beggars, Jews, and mountaineers,
Who, armed with daggers, dress themselves in rags,
And every regiment plies a double trade.
When darkness falls disorder reigns, and then
The doubtful soldier changes to a thief.
The robber Matalobos has more troops
Than any Baron. One of his followers
Made war upon the king of Spain. Alas!

The country peasantry, unshamed, insult
The carriage of the king. And he, your lord,
Consumed by grief and fear, stays all alone
Within the Escorial, with but the dead
He treads upon, and stoops his anxious brow
From which the empire crumbles fast! Behold,
Alas! all Europe crushing 'neath its heel
This land, once purpled — which is now in rags.
The state is ruined in this shocking age;
And you dispute among yourselves who shall
The fragments take! The Spanish nation, once
So great, lies in the shadow enervate,
And dies while you upon it live — mournful
As a lion that to vermin is a prey! —
Oh, Charles the Fifth, in these dread times of shame
And terror, oh, what dost thou in thy tomb
Most mighty Emperor? Arise,— come, see
The best supplanted by the very worst;
This kingdom, now in agony — that was
Constructed out of Empires — near its fall.
It wants thine arm! Come to the rescue, Charles!
For Spain is dying, blotted out, self slain!
Thy globe, which brightly shone in thy right hand,
A dazzling sun that made the world believe
That thenceforth at Madrid the day first dawn'd,
Is now a dead star, that in the gloom grows less
And less — a moon three quarters gnaw'd away,
And still decreasing ne'er to rise again
But be effaced by other nations! Oh,
Thy heritage is now put up for sale.
Alas! they make piastres of thy rays,
And soil thy splendours! Giant! can it be
Thou sleepest? By its weight thy sceptre now
They sell! A crowd of dwarfs deformed cut up
Thy royal robes to make their doublets, while
Th' Imperial Eagle, which beneath thy rule
Covered the world, and grasped its thunderbolts

And darted flame, a poor unfeather'd bird
Is cooking in their stew-pan infamous!

[*The Counsellors are silent in their consternation. But the MARQUIS DE PRIEGO and the COUNT DE CAMPOREAL raise their heads and look angrily at RUY BLAS. Then CAMPOREAL, after having spoken to PRIEGO, goes to the table and writes a few words on a piece of paper which they both sign.*

COUNT DE CAMPOREAL (*pointing to the MARQUIS DE PRIEGO and presenting the paper to RUY BLAS*).

In both our names, your Grace, I tender you
The resignation of our posts.

RUY BLAS (*taking the paper calmly*).

Thanks. You

Will with your family retire,

(*To PRIEGO.*)

You, Sir,

To Andalusia.

(*To CAMPOREAL.*)

You, Count, unto

Castile. To his estates each one. Set out

To-morrow.

[*The two nobles bow and exeunt haughtily wearing their hats. RUY BLAS, turning to the other counsellors.*

Whoso'er declines to go

My road, can follow now those gentlemen.

[*Silence for awhile. RUY BLAS seats himself in a chair with a back, placed by the side of the royal chair, and begins to open letters. While running his eyes over them one after another, COVADENGA, ARIAS, and UBILLA exchange a few words in low tones.*

UBILLA (*to COVADENGA, indicating RUY BLAS*).

A master we have found, my friend. This man
Will rise to greatness.

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

Yes, if he has time.

COVADENGA.

And if he does not lose himself at view
Of all too near.

UBILLA.

He will be Richelieu!

DON MANUEL ARIAS.

Unless 'tis Olivarez ¹ that he proves!

RUY BLAS (*after having run over in an excited manner a letter he had just opened*).

A plot! what's this? Now, Sirs, what did I say?

(*Reading.*)

"Duke d' Olmedo must watch. A snare there is

Preparing to remove a personage,

One of the greatest of Madrid." (*Examining the letter.*)

They say

Not whom. But I will watch.— Anonymous

The letter is.

Enter a Court Usher who approaches RUY BLAS with a profound bow.

How now — what's this?

USHER.

Unto

Your Excellence, th' Ambassador of France

I now announce.

RUY BLAS.

Ah, Harcourt! at this time

I cannot see him.

USHER (*bowing*).

And the Nuncio

¹ Gaspar Guzman, Count d'Olivarez, Minister of Philip the Fourth of Spain. For a time he seemed the redresser of abuses, but commerce and agriculture declined under his sway, and his foreign policy was disastrous. He was ultimately banished from Court and died in disgrace.—
TRANS.

Imperial waits in the saloon of honour
To see your Excellence.

RUY BLAS.

Oh, at this hour

It is impossible.

[*The Usher bows and exit. A few moments previously a Page dressed in a livery of pinkish-grey and silver, had entered and approached RUY BLAS.*

RUY BLAS (*perceiving him*).

My Page, to none

Whatever am I visible just now.

THE PAGE (*in a low voice*).

The Count de Guritan, who has return'd
From Neubourg —

RUY BLAS (*with a gesture of surprise*).

Ah! — Page, show to him my house

I' the suburb, saying that to-morrow he

Will find me there — if it should please him. Go.

[*The Page exit.*

(*To the Counsellors.*)

We shall have work together soon to do.

In two hours, gentlemen, return.

[*All exeunt, bowing low to RUY BLAS.*

[*RUY BLAS is alone, and walks a few steps, absorbed in deep reverie. Suddenly in the corner of the room the tapestry is raised, and the QUEEN appears. She is dressed in white, with a crown on her head. She seems radiant with joy, and looks at RUY BLAS with an expression of respect and admiration. She holds back the tapestry with one arm, behind which is perceptible a dark recess, in which a little door can be distinguished. RUY BLAS, in turning round, sees the QUEEN, and remains as if petrified by the apparition.*

SCENE 3.— RUY BLAS — THE QUEEN.

THE QUEEN.

Oh, thanks!

RUY BLAS.

Oh, Heaven!

THE QUEEN.

You have done well to speak them thus.

I can refrain no longer, Duke. I must

Press now that loyal hand so strong and true.

*[She walks quickly towards him and takes his hand,
which she presses before he can prevent her.]*RUY BLAS (*aside*).

To shun her for six months, and then at once

Thus suddenly behold her!

(*Aloud.*) Madam, you

Were there ——

THE QUEEN.

Yes, Duke, and I heard all you said.

Yes, I was there, and listened with my soul!

RUY BLAS (*pointing to the hiding-place*).

I never thought —— Madam, that hiding-place ——

THE QUEEN.

It is unknown to all. A dark recess

That the Third Philip hollowed in the wall,

By means of which the master heard all things

While, spirit-like, invisible. And oft

From there have I beheld the Second Charles,

Mournful and dull, attend the Councils where

They pillaged him and sacrificed the State.

RUY BLAS.

And what said he?

THE QUEEN.
He nothing said.

RUY BLAS.

Nothing!

What did he, then?

THE QUEEN.
He to the hunting field
Went off. But you! Your threatening words still ring
Upon mine ear. Oh! in what haughty ways
You treated them, and how superbly right
You were! The border of the tapestry
I raised and saw you. Yes, your flashing eyes
With lightning overwhelmed them, and without
Fury. Unto them everything was said.
You seemed to me the only upright one!
But where, then, have you learn'd so many things?
How comes it that you know effects and cause?
That everything you know? Whence cometh it
That your voice speaks as tongues of kings should speak,
Why, then, were you like messenger of God,
So terrible and great?

RUY BLAS.
Because — because
I love you! I whom all these hate. Because
I know full well that what they seek to crush
Must fall on you! Because there's nothing can
Dismay a reverent passion so profound.
Therefore to save you I would save the world!
Unhappy man, who loves you with such love.
Alas! I think of you as think the blind
Of day. Oh, Madam, hear me. I've had dreams
Uncounted. I have loved you from afar,
From the deep depths of shade; I have not dared
To touch your finger-tips. You dazzled me
As sight of angel might. I've suffered much,

Truly I have. Ah, Madam, if you knew!
Six months I hid my love — but now I speak.
I fled — I shunned you, but I tortured was.
I am not thinking of these men at all.
I love you! And, oh God! I dare to speak
The words unto your Majesty. Now say,
What I must do? Should you desire my death,
I'll die. Oh, pardon me — I'm terrified!

THE QUEEN.

Oh, speak! enchant me! Never in my life
Such words I've heard. I listen. 'Tis thy soul
That speaking overwhelms me quite. I need
Thy voice, thine eyes. Oh, if thou knewest! I
It is who suffered! Ah, a hundred times
When in the last six months your eyes shunn'd mine ——
But no, I must not say these things so fast ——
I'm most unhappy. Silent let me be.
I am afraid!

RUY BLAS (*listening with rapture*).

Oh, Madam, finish. You
With joy fill up my heart.

THE QUEEN.

Well, listen, then.

[*Raising her eyes to heaven.*]

Yes, I will tell him all. Is it a crime?
So much the worse! But when the heart is torn
One cannot help but show what there was hid.
Thou fled'st the Queen? Ah, well, the Queen sought thee.
Each day she came there to that secret place,
And listened to thee, gathering up thy words.
Silent, in contemplation of thy mind,
Which judged, and resolutely willed. Thy voice
Enthralled me, and gave interest to all.
To me thou seem'dst the real king, the right
True master. I it was that in six months —



The Queen. "Don Caesar—I to you give up my soul. The Queen for others, I to you am but a woman."

Dramas. Ruy Blas: Act III, Sc. III, Page 365.



Perchance thou doubttest — made thee mount unto
The summit; where by fate thou should'st have been,
A woman placed thee. All that concerned me
Thou hast considered. First it was a flower,
But now an Empire. Ah, I reverence thee.
At first I thought thee good — but afterwards
I found thee great. My God, 'tis this that wins
A woman! If I now do ill, oh why
Was I incarcerated in this tomb,
As in a cage they put a dove, deprived
Of hope, of love, without one gilded ray?
— Some day, when we have time, I'll tell thee all
That I have suffered, I, ever alone,
As if forgot! humiliated too
Most constantly. Now judge. 'Twas yesterday,——
My chamber I disliked; you know — for you
Know all things — rooms there are where we feel more
Depressed than in some others. Mine I wished
To change. Now see what chains are ours, they would
Not let me. Thus a slave am I. O Duke,
It must have been that heaven sent thee here
To save the tottering state, and from the gulf
To draw the people back — the working ones,
And love me who thus suffer. Ah I tell
Thee all at random, in my simple way.
You must, however, see that I am right.

RUY BLAS (*falling on his knees*).

Madam.——

THE QUEEN (*gravely*).

Don Cæsar — I to you give up
My soul. The Queen for others, I to you
Am but a woman. By the heart to you
It is that I belong. And I have faith
To know your honour will respect mine own.
Whenever you shall call me I will come.

Ready I am. Sublime thy spirit is,
Oh Cæsar. And be proud, for thou art crown'd
By genius. (*She kisses his forehead.*)
Adieu! [*She raises the tapestry and exit.*]

SCENE 4.—RUY BLAS (*alone*).

[*He is as if absorbed in seraphic contemplation.*]

Before mine eyes
'Tis heav'n I see! In all my life, oh God,
This hour stands first. Before me is a world,
A world of light, as if the paradise
We dream about had open'd wide and fill'd
My being with new light and brilliancy!
In me, around me, everywhere is joy,
Intoxication, mystery, and delight,
And pride, and that one thing that on the earth
Approaches most divinity, love — love,
In majesty and power. The Queen loves me!
Oh heavens, it is true — me — me — myself!
Since the Queen loves me I am more than King!
Oh, it is dazzling. Conqueror, happy, loved.
Duke d'Olmedo am I — and at my feet
Is Spain. I have her heart. That angel, whom
Upon my knees I contemplate and name,
Has by a word transfigured me and made
Me more than man. But in my star-lit dream
Do I move waking! Yes, I'm very sure
'Twas she herself who spoke — quite sure 'twas she.
A little diadem of silver lace
She wore; and I observed the while she spoke
— I think I see it still — an eagle 'graved
Upon her golden bracelet. She confides
In me, has told me so. — Poor Angel! Oh,
If it be true that God in granting love
Does by a miracle within us blend

That which can make man great with that which can
His nature soften, I who nothing fear
Since I am loved by her, I, who have power,
Thanks to her choice supreme, I, whose full heart
Might well the envy be of kings, declare —
Before my God who hears me — without fear,
And with loud voice, that Madam you may trust
In me,—unto my arm as Queen, unto
My heart as woman,—for devotion, pure
And loyal, dwells i' the depth of my great love.
Ah, fear thou nothing!

[During this speech a man had entered, by a door at the back, wrapped in a large cloak and with a hat gallooned in silver. He advances slowly towards RUY BLAS without being seen, and at the moment when RUY BLAS, intoxicated with ecstasy and happiness, raises his eyes to heaven, this man slaps him on the shoulder. RUY BLAS turns, startled as if awakening from a dream. The man lets fall his cloak, and RUY BLAS recognises DON SALLUSTE. DON SALLUSTE is dressed in a pinkish-grey livery, gallooned with silver, like that of the page of RUY BLAS.]

SCENE 5.— RUY BLAS, DON SALLUSTE.

DON SALLUSTE (*placing his hand on the shoulder of RUY BLAS*).

Ah, good day.

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

Great God!

I'm lost! It is the Marquis that is here!

DON SALLUSTE.

I wager now you did not think of me.

RUY BLAS.

Indeed your lordship did surprise me.

(*Aside.*) Oh,

My misery is resumed. When turned towards

An angel, 'twas a demon came!

[*He hurries to the tapestry which conceals the little hiding place, and bolts the door inside. Then he returns trembling to DON SALLUSTE.*]

DON SALLUSTE.

Well now,

How are you?

RUY BLAS (*his eyes fixed on DON SALLUSTE, who is imperturbable and as if himself incapable of gathering together his ideas*).

Why this livery?

DON SALLUSTE (*still smiling*).

I desired

To find an entrance to the palace. This

Admits me everywhere. I have assumed

Your livery, and find it suits me well.

[*He puts on his hat. RUY BLAS remains bareheaded.*]

RUY BLAS.

But I'm alarmed for you.

DON SALLUSTE.

Alarmed! What was

That word so ludicrous?

RUY BLAS.

Exiled you were!

DON SALLUSTE.

You think so? Possibly.

RUY BLAS.

If it should be

That in the palace you were recognised
In the broad daylight?

DON SALLUSTE.

Nonsense! Happy folks

Who are about the Court, would waste their time,
The time that flies so fast, remembering
A face that's in disgrace. Besides, who looks
Upon a lackey's profile?

(*He seats himself in the arm-chair. RUY BLAS remains standing.*)

By the bye,
And if you please, what's this that in Madrid
They say? Is't true, that, burning with a zeal
Extravagant, and only for the sake
Of public funds, you've exiled a grandee,
That dear Priego? You've forgotten quite
That you're relations, for his mother was
A Sandoval — yours also. What the deuce!
A Sandoval doth bear on field of "or"
A bend of "sable." Look to your blazonry,
Don Cæsar, it is very clear. Such things,
My dear, between relations should not be.
The wolves that fight with other wolves, make they
Good leaders? Open wide your eyes for self,
But shut them for the others. For himself
Each one.

RUY BLAS (*recovering himself a little*).

However, Sir — permit me, pray.

The Marquis de Priego, of the State
A noble, does great wrong in swelling now
Th' expenses of the kingdom. Soon we shall
Have need to put an army in the field;
We have not money, yet it must be done.
Bavaria's Prince is at the point of death;
And yesterday the Count d'Harcourt, when well
You know said to me in the Emperor's

His master's name, that if the Archduke should
Assert his claim, war would break out ——

DON SALLUSTE.

The air

Seems rather chill — will you be good enough
To close the casement?

[RUY BLAS, *pale with shame and despair, hesitates a moment; then by an effort he goes slowly to the window, and shuts it. He returns to DON SALLUSTE, who is still seated in the arm-chair, watching him in an indifferent manner.*

RUY BLAS (*continuing his endeavour to convince DON SALLUSTE*).

Deign, I beg, to see

How very difficult a war will prove;
What without money can we do? Listen,
My Lord. Spain's safety in her honour lies.
For me — I've to the Emperor said, as if
Our arms were ready, I'd oppose him ——

DON SALLUSTE (*interrupting him, and pointing to his handkerchief, which he had let fall on entering*).

Stay,

Pick up my handkerchief.

[RUY BLAS, *as if tortured, again hesitates; then stoops and takes up the handkerchief, giving it to DON SALLUSTE.*

DON SALLUSTE (*putting the handkerchief in his pocket*).

You did observe? ——

RUY BLAS (*with an effort*).

Yes, Spain is at our feet; her safety now
And public interest demand that each
Forgets himself. The nation blesses those
Who would release her. Let us dare be great
And strike and save the people. Let us now

Remove the mask from knaves, and let in light
Upon intrigue.

DON SALLUSTE (*with indifference*).

First let me say all this

Is wearying,— it of the pedant smacks,
His petty way of making monstrous noise
Concerning everything. What signifies
A wretched million, more or less, devoured,
That all these dismal cries are raised about?
My boy, great Lords are not the pedant class,
Freely they live — I speak without bombast.
The mien of them who would redress abuse
Is pride inflated and with anger red!
Pshaw! now you want to be a famous spark
Adored by traitors and by citizens.
'Tis very droll. Have newer fancies, pray.
The public good! First think now of your own.
Spain's safety is a hollow phrase; the rest
Can shout, my boy, as well as you can do.
And popularity? a rattling noise
Thought glory. Oh, what charming work to prowl
Like barking dog about the taxes! But
I know conditions better. Probity?
And faith? and virtue? faded tinsel, used
Already from the time of Charles the Fifth.
You are no fool. Must you be cured of all
This sentiment? You were a sucking child
When we did gaily and without remorse
By pin-pricks, or a kick, burst all at once
Your fine balloon, and amidst roaring mirth
Let out the wind from all these crotchets.

RUY BLAS.

But

My Lord, however —

DON SALLUSTE (*with icy smile*).

You're astonishing.

Let us be serious now.

(*In an abrupt and imperious manner.*)

To-morrow, all

The morning you will wait at home for me,
Within the house I lent you. What I do
Now nears the end. Only retain the mutes
To wait upon us. In the garden have,
But hidden by the trees, a carriage, well
Appointed, horses, all prepared for use.
I will arrange relays. Do all I wish.
— You will want money, I will send it you.—

RUY BLAS.

I will obey you, Sir. I will do all.
But first, oh, swear to me that with this work
The Queen has nought to do.

DON SALLUSTE (*playing with an ivory knife on the table.
turns half round*).

With what are you

Now meddling?

RUY BLAS (*trembling and looking at him with terror*).

Oh, you are a fearful man!

My knees beneath me tremble.— Towards a gulf
Invisible you drag me. Oh, I feel
That in a hand most terrible I am!
You have some monstrous scheme. Something I see
That's horrible.— Have mercy upon me!
Oh, I must tell,— judge alas! yourself
You knew it not. I love that woman!

DON SALLUSTE.

Yes.

I knew it.

RUY BLAS.

Knew it!

DON SALLUSTE.

What, by heaven, can

That signify?

RUY BLAS (*leaning for support against the wall,
and as if speaking to himself*).

Then for mere sport he has,

The coward! this torture practised upon me!

Ah, this affair will be most horrible!

[He raises his eyes to heaven,

Oh, God, all-powerful! who tries me now,

Spare me, oh God!

DON SALLUSTE.

There, that's enough — you dream!

Truly you think in earnest that you are

A personage, but 'tis buffoonery.

I to an end move on which I alone

Should know, an end that happier is for you

Than you can guess. But keep you still. Obey.

I have already said, and I repeat

I wish your good. Proceed, the thing is done.

And after all, what are the woes of love?

We all go through them — troubles of a day.

Know you, an Empire destiny's concerned?

What's yours beside it? Willingly I'd tell

You all; but have the sense to comprehend.

Your station keep. I'm very good and kind.

A lackey though, of coarse clay or of fine,

Is but an instrument to serve my whims.

With your sort, what one wishes one can do.

Your master did disguise you as his plan

Required, and can unmask you at his will.

I made you a great Lord — fantastic part —

But for the instant — and you have complete

The outfit. But forget not that you are

My servant. You pay court unto the Queen —

An incident — like stepping up behind
My carriage. Therefore reasonable be.

RUY BLAS (*who has listened distracted, as if he could
not believe his ears*).

Oh God — oh God! the just! the merciful!
Oh, of what crime is this the punishment?
What have I done? Oh, Thou our Father art,
And wouldst not that a man despair. Behold,
Then, where I am! — And willingly, my Lord,
And without wrong in me — only to see
A victim agonised, in what abyss
You've plunged me! torturing thus a heart replete
With love and faith, to serve alone as means
For vengeance of your own!

(*As if speaking to himself.*)

For vengeance 'tis!

The thing is certain. I divine too well
It is against the Queen! What can I do?
Go tell her all? Great Heaven! become to her
An object of disgust and horror! Knave
With double face! A Crispin! Scoundrel base
And impudent, such as they bastinate
And drive away! Never! — I grow insane,
My reason totters!

(*A pause. He ponders.*)

God! behold what things

Are done! To build an engine silently,
To arm it hideously with frightful wheels
Unnumber'd, then to see it work, upon
The stone to throw a livery'd one, a thing,
A serving man, and set in motion all —
And suddenly to watch come out, beneath
The wheels, some muddy blood-stained rags, a head
All broken, and a warm and steaming heart,
And not to shudder then to find, despite
The name they call him, that the livery was

But outward covering of a man.

(*Turning towards DON SALLUSTE.*)

But oh,

There still is time! Truly, my Lord, as yet
Th' horrible wheel is not in motion.

(*Throws himself at his feet.*)

Oh,

Have pity on me! Mercy! Pity her!
You know that I a faithful servant am,
You often said it. See how I submit!
Oh, grace!

DON SALLUSTE.

The man will never understand.
This wearies me!

RUY BLAS (*trailing at his feet.*)
Oh, mercy!

DON SALLUSTE.

Let us now

Have done.

(*He turns towards the window.*)

You badly closed the window there,
I'm sure. A draught comes thence.

(*He goes to the casement and shuts it.*)

RUY BLAS (*rising*).

It is too much!

At present I'm Duke d'Olmedo, and still
Th' all-powerful minister! I raise my head
From 'neath the foot which crushes me.

DON SALLUSTE.

What's that

You say? Repeat the phrase. Is Ruy Blas
Indeed Duke d'Olmedo? Your eyes are bound.
'Twas only on Bazan that thou wast raised
To be Olmedo

RUY BLAS.

I will order you

To be arrested.

DON SALLUSTE.

I'll say who you are.

RUY BLAS (*excitedly*).

But ——

DON SALLUSTE.

You'll accuse me? I've risked both our heads.

That was foreseen. Too soon do you assume

The air of triumph.

RUY BLAS.

I'll deny it all.

DON SALLUSTE.

Pshaw! you're a child.

RUY BLAS.

You have no proof!

DON SALLUSTE.

And you

No memory. I'll do just what I say,

And you had best believe me. But the glove

Are you, I am the hand.

(*Lowering his voice and approaching RUY BLAS.*)

If thou obey'st

Me not, if thou to-morrow do not stay

At home preparing what I wish, if thou

Should'st speak a single word of all which now

Is passing, if by look or gesture thou

Betray — first she, for whom thou fearest, shall,

By this thy folly, in a hundred spots

Be publicly defamed, and ruined quite,

And afterwards she shall receive — in this

There's nought obscure — a paper under seal

Which in a place secure I keep; 'twas writ

Thou wilt remember by what hand? and signed
Thou knowest how? These are the words her eyes
Will read: "I, Ruy Blas, the serving-man
Of the most noble Lord the Marquis of
Finlas, engage to serve him faithfully.
On all occasions as a servant true
In public or in secrecy."

RUY BLAS (*crushed, and in husky voice.*)

Enough.

I will, my Lord, do what you please.

[*The door at the back opens. One sees the members of the Privy Council re-entering. DON SALLUSTE hastens to wrap his cloak round him.*

DON SALLUSTE (*in a low voice.*)

They come.

(*Aloud, and bowing low to RUY BLAS.*)

I am your humble servant, my Lord Duke.

[*Exit*

ACT FOURTH: DON CÆSAR

A small, gloomy, but sumptuous room. Old-fashioned wainscot and furniture, with old gilding. The walls covered with old hangings of crimson velvet pressed down in places, and at the back of the arm-chairs, and gathered by shining gold galloon into vertical bands. At the back folding doors. At the left angle of the wall, a large corner chimney with sculpture of the time of Philip the Second, and an escutcheon of wrought iron inside. At the opposite angle a little door leading to a dark closet. A single window at the left, placed very high, has bars across it, and an inside splay like the windows of prisons. On the walls are some old portraits smoke-begrimed and half defaced. A chest for clothes and a Venetian looking-glass. Large arm-chairs in the fashion Philip the Third's time. A highly ornamented cupboard against the wall. A square table with writing materials on it. A little round table with gilt feet in a corner. It is morning.

When the curtain rises RUY BLAS, dressed in black without his mantle and without the Fleece, is seen walking about the room greatly agitated. At the back stands his Page motionless, as if awaiting orders.

SCENE 1.—RUY BLAS. THE PAGE.

RUY BLAS (*aside, as if speaking to himself*).
What is it can be done? She must be saved!
Before all else! Nothing but her to be
Considered! Should my brains from on a wall
Spurt out, or should the gibbet claim, or should

Hell seize me, rescued she must be! But how?
To give my blood, my heart, my soul, all that
Were nothing — it were easy. But to break
This web! To guess, for guess one must, what schemes
This man constructing has combined! Sudden
He comes from out the shadow, and therein
Replunges. Lone in darkness what does he?
When I remember that at first to him
For self I pleaded! Oh, 'twas cowardice!
Moreover it was stupid! This is why —
He is a wretch.— The thing has olden date,
No doubt.— How could I think, that when he held
His prey but half devoured, the demon would,
In pity for his lackey, leave the Queen!
Can we subdue wild beasts? Oh misery!
I yet must save her! I, the cause of this!
At any price it must be done. All — all
Is ended. Now behold my fall! From height
So great so low! Have I then dream'd? — Yet oh!
She must escape! But he! By what door will
He come — and by what trap, oh God, will he,
The traitor black, proceed? As of this house,
So of my life, he is the lord. He can
The gilding all strip off. He has the keys
Of all the locks. Enter and leave he can,
Approaching in the dark to tread upon
My heart as on this floor. Yes, this my dream!
Such fate confuses thought i' the rapid tide
Of things so quickly done. I am distraught.
No one thought have I clear. My mind — of which
I was so vain — oh God! is now in such
A hurricane of rage and fear 'tis like
A reed storm-twisted! — Oh what can I do?
Let me reflect. At first to hinder her
From stirring from the palace. Yes, 'tis that
Undoubtedly that is the snare. Around
Myself the whirlpool is, and darkness dense.

I feel the mesh but see it not. Oh, how
I suffer!—'Tis decided. To forewarn—
Prevent her going from the palace—this
At once to do. But how? No one I have!

[*He reflects earnestly. Suddenly, as if struck with an idea, and having a ray of hope, he raises his head.*]

Don Guritan! Ah, yes, he loves her well,
And he is loyal!

(*He signs to the Page to approach, then speaks low.*)

Page, this instant go

Unto Don Guritan. Make him from me
Apologies; and beg him then without
Delay to seek the Queen, and pray her in
My name, and in his own, that whatso'er
May happen or be said, on no account
To leave the palace for three days. To stir
Not out. Now run. (*Recalling the Page.*)

Ah!

(*He takes a leaf and a pencil from his note case.*)

Let him give these words

Unto the Queen,—and watch!

(*He writes on his knee rapidly.*)

“Believe what says

Don Guritan, as he advises do.”

[*He folds the paper and gives it to the Page.*]

As for the duel, tell him I was wrong,
That I am at his feet, that I have now
A trouble, beg of him to pity me,
And take my supplication to the Queen
On th' instant. Tell him that I will to him,
In public, make apologies. And say
There is for her a danger imminent.
She must not venture out for quite three days
Whate'er occurs.— Exactly do all this;
Go, be discreet, and nothing let appear.

PAGE.

I am to you devoted — for you are
A master good.

RUY BLAS.

Run fast, my little Page,
Hast thou well understood?

PAGE.

Oh yes, my lord.

Be satisfied.

[Exit Page.]

RUY BLAS (*alone, falling into an arm-chair*).

My thoughts grow calmer now.

Yet I forget, and feel things all confused
As were I mad. Ah yes, the means are sure.
Don Guritan.—— But I myself? Is there
The need to wait Don Salluste here? Wherefore?
Oh no, I will not wait, and that perchance
Will paralyse him for a day. Within
A church I want to pray. I'll go — I've need
Of help, and God will me inspire!

*[He takes his hat from a side table, and shakes a little
bell placed on the table. Two negroes dressed in
pale green velvet brocaded with gold, jackets plaited
into great lappets, appear at the door at the back.]*

I leave.

But very soon a man will hither come —
And by an entrance known to him. May be,
When in the house, as if he were indeed
The master, he will act. Let him so do.
And if some others come ——

(After hesitating a moment.)

My faith, why then

You'll please to let them enter.

*[By a gesture he dismisses the negroes who bow in token
of obedience and exeunt.]*

Now I go!

[Exit.]

[At the moment the door closes on RUY BLAS there is

heard a great noise in the chimney, from which suddenly falls a man wrapped in a tattered cloak. It is DON CÆSAR who throws himself into the room.

SCENE 2.—DON CÆSAR.

DON CÆSAR (*scared, out of breath, stupefied, disordered, with an expression of mingled joy and anxiety*).

'Tis I! So much the worse!

[He rises, rubbing the leg on which he has fallen, and comes into the room hat in hand and bowing low.

Your pardon, pray!

But heed me not. I don't attend — go on

With your discourse, continue I entreat,

I enter rather rudely — Sirs, for that

I'm sorry!

(He stops in the middle of the room, perceiving he is alone.)

No one here? — When on the roof

Just now I perched, I thought I heard the sound

Of voices.— No one, though!

(Seats himself in an arm-chair.)

That's very well.

Let me now gather up my thoughts. And good

Is solitude. Oh, what events! — Marvels

With which I'm charged, just as a wetted dog

Who shakes off water. First those Alguazils

Who seized me in their claws, and that absurd

Embarkment; then the corsairs, and the town

So big where I was beaten sorely. Then

Temptations of that sallow woman; next,

Departure from the prison; travels, too,

And at the last return to Spain. And then —

Oh, what a tale! — The day that I arrived,

Those self-same Alguazils the first I met.

My desperate flight, and their enraged pursuit;

I leaped a wall, and then I saw a house

Half-hidden by the trees; I thither ran;
None saw me, so I nimbly climbed from shed
To roof; at last I introduced myself
Into the bosom of a family
By coming down a chimney, where I tore
To rags my newest mantle, that now hangs
About my heels. By heav'n, Cousin Salluste,
You are a braggart rogue!

(Looking at himself in a little Venetian glass placed on the sculptured chest.)

My doublet here

Has kept to me through these disasters all.
It struggles yet.

[He takes off his mantle and admires in the glass his rose-colored doublet, now torn and patched; then he puts his hand sharply to his leg, with a look at the chimney.]

But in my fall my leg

Has suffer'd horribly!

[He opens the drawers of the chest. In one of them he finds a mantle of light-green velvet embroidered with gold. The mantle given by DON SALLUSTE to RUY BLAS. He examines it and compares it with his own.]

It seems to me

This mantle is more decent than my own.

[He puts on the green mantle, and leaves his own in the chest, after having carefully folded it up. He adds his hat, which he crushes under the mantle with a blow of his fist. Then he shuts the drawer, and struts about proudly draped in the fine mantle embroidered with gold.]

'Twill do. Behold me now return'd. All is
Proceeding well. Ah, cousin very dear,
You wished to send me off to Africa,
Where man is mouse unto the tiger! Ah,
I'll be revenged on you most savagely,

My cursèd cousin, when I've breakfasted.
In my right name I'll go to you, and drag
With me a troupe of rogues, such as can smell
The gibbet a league off — and more, I will
Deliver you alive, thus to appease
The appetites of all my creditors,
These followed by their little ones.

[He perceives in the corner a pair of splendid boots trimmed with lace. He takes off his shoes in a leisurely manner, and, without scruple, puts on the new boots.]

But first

Now let me see where all his perfidies
Have led me.

(After looking all round the room.)

A mysterious dwelling, fit
For tragedies. Closed doors and shutters barred,
A dungeon quite. Into this charming place
One enters from the top, just as there comes
The wine into the bottles.

(With a sigh.)

Ah, good wine

Is very good.

[He notices the little door at the right, opens it, and hastily enters the closet with which it communicates, and then comes back with a gesture of astonishment.]

Oh wonders, wonders more!

Where everything is closed, a little room
Without the means of egress!

[He goes to the door at the back, half-opens it, and looks out; he lets it close and comes to the front.]

Not a soul! —

Oh, where the deuce am I? — At any rate,
I've managed to escape the Alguazils.
What matters all the rest? Need I be scared
And take a gloomy view, because I ne'er

Before beheld a house like this?

(He seats himself in the arm-chair, and yawns, but soon gets up again.)

Come, though,

I feel the dullness here is horrible!

(Perceiving a little corner cupboard in the wall.)

Let's see, this looks to me a little like

A bookcase.

(He opens it, and finds it to be a well-furnished larder.)

Ah! 'tis just the thing.— A pie,

A water-melon, and some wine. A cold

Collation for emergency. By Jove!

I'd prejudices 'gainst this house.

(Examines the flagons one after the other.)

All good.—

Come, now! This place is worthy of great praise.

[He goes to the corner, and brings thence to the front a little round table, on which he places the contents of the larder — bottles, dishes, etc. He adds a glass, plate, fork, etc. Then he takes up one of the bottles.]

Let's read this one the first.

(He fills the glass, and drinks off the wine.)

A work that is

Most admirable. The production fine

Of that so famous poet called the sun!

Xérès-des-Chevaliers can nothing show

More ruby-like.

(He sits, and pours out another glass of wine.)

What book's worth this? Find me

Something that is more spiritual!

(He drinks.)

Ah!

This comforts! Let us eat.

(He cuts the pie.)

I have outstripp'd

Those dogs of Alguazils. They've lost the scent.

(He begins eating.)

The king of pies! and as for him who is
The master here, should he drop in —

*(He goes to the sideboard, and brings thence a glass
and a plate.)*

Why, him

I now invite, if that he does not come
To drive me hence. Let me be very quick.

(He takes large mouthfuls.)

My dinner done, I'll look about the house.

Who can inhabit it? Maybe, he is

A jolly fellow. This place can but hide
Some feminine intrigue. Pshaw! What's the harm
That here I do? What is it, I beseech?

Nought but this worthy's hospitality
After the ancient way,

(He half kneels, surrounding the table with his arms.)
Embracing thus

The altar. *(He drinks.)*

Firstly though, this wine is not

A bad man's wine. And then if anyone
Should come, I'd certainly declare myself.

How you would rage, my old accursèd coz!

What, that low fellow, that Bohemian!

That beggarly black sheep Zafari? Yes,

Don Cæsar de Bazan, the cousin he

Of the Don Salluste! What a fine surprise!

And what a hubbub in Madrid! When was't

That he return'd? This morning, or this night?

What tumult everywhere at such a bomb,

The great forgotten name that all at once

Again is heard! Don Cæsar de Bazan!

Yes, if you please, good Sirs. Nobody thought —

Nobody spoke of him, — then he's not dead!

He lives, my dames and gentlemen! The men

Will cry: The deuce! The women they will say,

Indeed! Aye, aye! Soft sound that mingles with

The barking of three hundred creditors

As you go home! Fine part to play! Alas!
I am wanting money for it.

(A noise is heard at the door.)

Some one comes!

No doubt t' expel me like a vile buffoon.—

No matter though. Cæsar, do nought by halves!

[He wraps himself in his cloak up to the eyes. The door at the back opens. A lackey in livery enters bearing a great courier's bag on his back.]

SCENE 3.—DON CÆSAR. A LACKEY.

DON CÆSAR *(scanning the LACKEY from head to foot.)*
Whom seek you here my friend? *(Aside.)*

I must assume

Great confidence — the peril is extreme.

THE LACKEY.

Don Cæsar de Bazan?

DON CÆSAR *(lowering his mantle from his face.)*

Don Cæsar! That's

Myself! *(Aside.)*

Here is the wonderful!

THE LACKEY.

You are,

My Lord, Don Cæsar de Bazan?

DON CÆSAR.

By heav'n

I have the honour so to be. Cæsar,

The true and only Cæsar! Count of Gar——

THE LACKEY *(placing the bag on the arm-chair.)*
Now deign to see if the amount be right

DON CÆSAR *(dazed — aside.)*

Some money! Oh, it is too wonderful!

(Aloud.)

My man ——

THE LACKEY.

You'll condescend to count. It is
 The sum that I was told to bring you.

DON CÆSAR (*gravely*).

Ah!

'Tis well, I understand. (*Aside*.)

The devil now

I wish —— But there we must not disarrange

This admirable story. In the nick

Of time it comes. (*Aloud*.)

Now want you a receipt?

THE LACKEY.

Not so, my Lord.

DON CÆSAR (*pointing at the table*).

Put there the money bag.

[*The Lackey obeys.*]

Whom comes it from?

THE LACKEY.

My Lord knows very well.

DON CÆSAR.

Undoubtedly, but still ——

THE LACKEY.

This money here ——

And this is what is needful that I add ——

Now comes for purpose that you know, from him

You know.

DON CÆSAR (*satisfied with the explanation*).

Ah!

THE LACKEY.

Both of us must careful be ——

Hush!

DON CÆSAR.

Hush! — This money comes — The phrase is most
Magnificent! Repeat it once again.

THE LACKEY.

This money —

DON CÆSAR.

All explains itself. It comes
From him I know —

THE LACKEY.

For purpose that you know.
We must —

DON CÆSAR.

The pair of us!

THE LACKEY.

Be guarded now.

DON CÆSAR.

It is quite clear.

THE LACKEY.

I do not understand,
I but obey.

DON CÆSAR.

Pshaw — Pshaw!

THE LACKEY.

But you, I know,
Do comprehend.

DON CÆSAR.

The deuce!

THE LACKEY.

Sufficient 'tis.

DON CÆSAR.

I take it and I understand, my boy,
Receiving money always easy is.

THE LACKEY

Hush!

DON CÆSAR.

Hush! Deuce take it — ah, we must not now
Imprudent be!

THE LACKEY.

Count it, my Lord!

DON CÆSAR.

For what,

Pray, do you take me?

[Admiring the rotundity of the bag on the table.

Oh! the fine paunch!

THE LACKEY (*insisting*).

But —

DON CÆSAR.

I do confide in thee.

THE LACKEY.

The gold is in

Broad quadruples, that weigh their full seven drachms

And six and thirty grains, or good doubloons,

The silver in cross-maries.

[DON CÆSAR opens the great bag and takes from it several small bags full of gold and silver, which he opens and empties on to the table admiringly; then he digs his hand into the bags of gold and draws out handfuls, filling his pockets with quadruples and doubloons.]

DON CÆSAR (*pausing, with majesty. Aside.*)

Now behold

My fine romance,— the crown of fairy-dreams

Is dying for love of a fat million.

[He continues filling his pockets.]

Oh joy! I take in like a galleon!

[One pocket filled, he passes to another. He seeks every-

where for pockets and seems to have forgotten the Lackey.

THE LACKEY (*who looks at him calmly*).
And now I wait your orders.

DON CÆSAR (*turning round*).
What to do?

THE LACKEY.
To promptly execute without delay
A something which you know, but I do not,
A thing of great importance —
DON CÆSAR (*interrupting him as if understanding*).
Public 'tis

And private —

THE LACKEY.
Which this instant should be done.
I say what I was told to say.

DON CÆSAR (*slapping him on the shoulder*).
And I
Applaud thee for it — faithful servant thou!

THE LACKEY.
That nothing be delayed my master sends
Myself to help you.

DON CÆSAR.
Acting in accord,
Let us do what he wishes. (*Aside.*) Hang me now
If I know what to tell him. (*Aloud.*) Galleon,
Come here, and first (*He fills the other glass with wine*),
Drink this!

THE LACKEY.
Indeed, my Lord —

DON CÆSAR.
Drink this.

[*The Lackey drinks, and DON CÆSAR again fills the glass.*

'Tis wine of Oropesa!

(*He makes the Lackey sit down, and plies him with wine.*)

Now

Let's chat.

(*Aside.*) His eyes already sparkle.

(*Aloud, and stretching himself on his chair.*)

Man

Is nought, dear friend, but black smoke that proceeds
From out the passions' fire. Pshaw! I declare

(*Pours wine for him to drink.*)

'Tis rubbish this I'm telling thee. At first

The smoke, unto blue heav'n recalled, comports

Itself in manner different from when

'Tis in a chimney. It mounts gaily, while

We tumble down.

(*He rubs his leg.*)

Only vile lead is man.

(*He fills the two glasses.*)

Let's drink. All thy doubloons are of less worth

Than is a passing drunkard's song.

(*Approaching nearer to him in a mysterious manner.*)

But see,

Be prudent. The o'erloaded axle breaks;

The wall without foundation suddenly

Gives way.—My mantle's collar please to hook.

THE LACKEY (*haughtily*).

My Lord, I'm not a valet.

(*Before DON CÆSAR can prevent him, he rings the little bell on the table.*)

DON CÆSAR (*aside — terrified*).

Oh, he rings!

The master, perhaps, will come himself. I'm caught!

[*Enter one of the Negroes. DON CÆSAR, a prey to the*

greatest anxiety, turns towards the opposite side, as if not knowing what to do.

THE LACKEY (*to the Negro*).

Fasten my Lord's clasp.

[*The Negro gravely approaches DON CÆSAR, who looks at him as if stupefied. Then he fastens the mantle, bows, and goes out, leaving DON CÆSAR petrified.*

DON CÆSAR (*rising from the table — aside*).

On my word of honour!

Beelzebub's abode this is!

(*He comes to the front, and strides about.*)

My faith!

Now let things drift, and take what comes. At least,
I'll stir the crowns; a coffer full of them.

The money I have got! What shall I do

With it?

(*Turning towards the Lackey, who is still at the table, drinking, and who begins to reel in his chair.*)

Your pardon — stop.

(*Musing — aside.*)

Now, let me see,—

If I should pay my creditors? — for shame!

— At least, to calm their minds that are so prompt

At turning sour,— if I should water them

With something on account? What good is it

To water flowers so villainous? How now

The devil did I think of such a thing?

Nothing there is like money to corrupt

A man, and fill him up unto the throat

With all mean sentiments! E'en if he were

From Hannibal himself descended, him

Who conquered Rome! To see me paying debts

I owe! what would they say? Ah, ah!

THE LACKEY (*emptying his glass*).

What now

Do you command of me?

DON CÆSAR.

Let be—I am

Reflecting. Drink, while waiting.

[*The Lackey begins drinking again. DON CÆSAR continues to muse; then suddenly strikes his forehead, as if he had found an idea.*

Yes!

(*To the Lackey.*)

Get up

Immediately. See now, what must be done.

Thy pockets fill with gold.

[*The Lackey rises, stumbling, and fills the pockets of his coat, DON CÆSAR helping him as he continues.*

Go thou unto

The lane which leads from out the Mayor Square,

Enter at Number Nine. A narrow house;

A pleasant dwelling, if it did not hap

The glass panes at the right were paper patched.

THE LACKEY.

A one-eyed house? ¹

DON CÆSAR.

Oh no, it only squints.¹

One might be crippled mounting up the stairs,

So take you care.

THE LACKEY.

A ladder is't?

DON CÆSAR.

Almost,

But steeper. Up above, a beauty dwells,

Easy to know — beneath a threepenny cap

Thickish disordered hair. She's rather short

And red — a charming woman, though. My boy,

You'll be respectful, she my dear love is,

¹ *Maison borgne* — French slang for a disreputable house; and *louche*, for a suspicious one.—TRANS.

Lucinda fair, with eyes like indigo,
Once she; who danced fandango for the Pope
At eve to see. Count out and give to her
A hundred of the ducats, in my name.
Then, in a hovel near, you'll see a stout
And red-nosed devil, with an old felt hat
Dragged down upon his eyebrows, and a plume,
A feather brush, that tragically hangs
Astonished from it; rapier at his side,
And rags upon his back. Give next, from me,
Unto this creature six piastres.—Then
Go further, thou wilt find a hole, black like
An oven, 'tis a tavern at cross roads;
There smokes and drinks i' the porch, a frequenter,
A gentle-manner'd man who leads a life
That's elegant, a gentleman from whom
An oath ne'er dropp'd, my heart's friend he; his name
Is Goulatromba. Give him thirty crowns!
'And tell him for thanksgiving he alone
Must drink them quick, and he shall have some more.
Give to these rascals in the biggest coins,
And do not wonder at the eyes they'll ope.

THE LACKEY.

And afterwards?

DON CÆSAR.

Why, keep the rest. And then

At last ——

THE LACKEY.

What would my Lord?

DON CÆSAR.

Then surfeit thou

Thyself, thou scamp. Break many pots, and make
Much noise, and not until to-morrow, in
The night, go home.

THE LACKEY.

Enough, my Prince.

[*He moves toward the door in a zigzag way.*]

DON CÆSAR (*aside — observing his walk*).

He is

Abominably drunk!

(*Recalling the other, who turns back.*)

Ah, now — when out

Thou goest, idle folks will follow thee.

Do honour to the drink thou's't had. Try thou

To bear thyself in noble fashion. If

By chance some crowns from out thy stocking drop,

Then let them fall,— and if assayers, clerks,

Some scholars, or the beggars that one sees

Pass by, should pick them up, let them do so.

Don't be a mortal fierce, that they would dread

T' approach.— And e'en if from thy pocket some

They take — be thou indulgent. They are men

As we. And, as you see, it is a law

For us, in this world full of misery,

To give sometimes a little joy to all

Who live.

(*With melancholy.*)

Perchance they will be hang'd some day!

Show, then, the kindness to them which is due!

Go, now.

[*The Lackey goes out. Left alone, DON CÆSAR sits down again, and leans his elbow on the table, appearing to be plunged in deep thought.*]

It is the duty of the sage

And Christian having money that he use

It well. For eight days at the very least

I have enough. These will I live. And should

A little money still remain, I will

Employ it piously. But I must not

Be over confident. Undoubtedly

'Tis all a blunder, and from me it will
Be taken, ah, the thing will all become
Misunderstood. A fine scrape this of mine. . . .

[*The door at the back opens. Enter an old, grey-haired Duenna in black dress and mantle, and with a fan.*

SCENE 4.—DON CÆSAR. A DUENNA.

THE DUENNA (*at the threshold of the door*).

Don Cæsar de Bazan?

[DON CÆSAR, *absorbed in his meditations, turns his head suddenly.*

DON CÆSAR.

Now then, what is it? (*Aside*).

A woman! Oh!

[*Whilst the Duenna makes a low respectful curtsey at the back he comes to the front wonder-struck.*

The devil or Salluste

Must be mixed up in this! Next I expect

To see my cousin here. Duenna, oh!

(*Aloud*).

'Tis I, Don Cæsar, tell your business, pray.

(*Aside*).

Most commonly it is a woman old

That ushers in a young one.

THE DUENNA (*bowing and making sign of the Cross*).

I, my Lord,

Salute you, on this fast day, in the name

Of Him o'er whom there's nothing can prevail.

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).

A galant ending that begins devoutly.

(*Aloud*).

Amen. Good day.

THE DUENNA.

May God maintain you, e'er
In happiness. (*Mysteriously*).

Know you of some one who
Has sent me now, with whom you've plann'd to-night
A secret meeting?

DON CÆSAR.

Oh, I'm capable

Of such a thing.

THE DUENNA (*who takes from her farthingale a folded letter
which she shows to him, but without allowing him
to take it.*)

Then you indeed it is,
Galant discreet, who've just addressed to one
Who loves you, for to-night a message,— one
Whom you know well?

DON CÆSAR.

It must be I.

THE DUENNA.

Good — good.

The lady married to some dotard old
Is forced no doubt, to careful be. I was
Desired to hither come. Her I know not,
But you know her — it was her waiting maid
Who told me about things. That was enough,
Without the names.

DON CÆSAR.

Excepting mine.

THE DUENNA.

'Tis plain,

Th' appointment for the lady has been made
By her soul's friend,— but fearing there may be
Some snare, and knowing too much caution ne'er
Spoiled aught, she sends me here from your own mouth
To have the confirmation —

DON CÆSAR.

Oh the old

And surly thing! What fuss about a sweet
Love letter! Yes, 'tis I myself, I tell
You so.

THE DUENNA (*placing on the table the folded letter, which
DON CÆSAR looks at with curiosity*).

In that case then, if you it be,
The one word, *Come*, upon the letter you
Will write — but not by your own hand — that so
There may be nothing compromised.

DON CÆSAR.

Indeed!

From mine own hand! (*Aside*).

A message well conveyed!

[*He puts out his hand to take the letter; but it has been
resealed and the Duenna will not let him touch it.*

THE DUENNA.

You must not open. You will recognise
The fold.

DON CÆSAR.

By Heaven! (*Aside*).

I who burn to see! —

But let me play my part!

[*He rings the little bell. One of the negroes enters.*

Know'st thou to write?

[*The Negro nods an affirmative sign. Astonishment of*

DON CÆSAR. (*Aside*.)

A sign! (*Aloud*). Art thou then dumb, thou rascal?

[*Again the Negro makes the sign of affirmation. Fresh
stupefaction of DON CÆSAR. (Aside.)*

Well!

Continue! Mutes appear the latest thing!

[*To the Mute, showing him the letter which the old
woman holds down on the table.*

Write there: *Come*.

[*The Mute writes. DON CÆSAR signs to the Duenna to take back the letter, and to the Mute to go. Exit the Mute.*

Ah! he is obedient!

THE DUENNA (*with an air of mystery again placing the letter in her farthingale, and approaching nearer to DON CÆSAR*).

To-night you'll see her. Is she very fair?

DON CÆSAR.

Oh, charming!

THE DUENNA.

'Twas the cunning waiting-maid

Who managed it. At sermon-time aside
She took me. Oh, how beautiful was she!
With angel's profile and a demon's eye.
Knowing in love affairs she seemed to be.

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).

I'd be contented with the maid!

THE DUENNA.

We judge —

For always beauty makes the plain afraid,—
So with Sultana and her slave, and with
The master and his man. Most certainly
Your love is very beautiful.

DON CÆSAR.

I'm proud,

Indeed, to think so!

THE DUENNA (*making a curtsey and about to withdraw*).
Sir, I kiss your hand.

DON CÆSAR (*giving her a handful of doubloons*).
I'll grease thy palm. Old woman, stop.

THE DUENNA (*pocketing them*).

Ah, youth

Is gay to-day!

DON CÆSAR (*dismissing her*).

Now go.

THE DUENNA (*curtseys*).

If you have need ——

I'm named Dame Oliva. Saint Isidro,

The Convent,——

[*She goes out. Afterwards the door re-opens and her head appears.*

Always at the right I sit

Of the third pillar entering the church.

[DON CÆSAR *turns round with impatience. The door closes; again it half opens and the old woman re-appears.*

To-night you'll see her! In your prayers, my Lord,
Remember me.

DON CÆSAR (*driving her away angrily*).

Ah!

[*The Duenna disappears and the door closes.*

DON CÆSAR (*alone*).

Now I'm resolved, my faith,

At nothing more to be at all surprised.

I'm in the moon. Behold a love affair

Now comes; I am about to satisfy

My heart, after long hunger. (*Musing.*) Oh all this

To me just now seems mighty good. But ah!

Beware the end!

[*The door at the back opens. DON GURITAN appears with two long naked swords under his arm.*

SCENE 5.—DON CÆSAR — DON GURITAN.

DON GURITAN (*at the back*).

Don Cæsar de Bazan?

DON CÆSAR (*turning and perceiving DON GURITAN with the two swords*).

And now! Well, well! Events were fine enough,
But better still they are. A dinner good,
Then money; and an assignation — now
A duel! Cæsar in his natural state
Again am I!

[*He greets DON GURITAN gaily, with demonstrative salutations; DON GURITAN looks at him impatiently, and advances to the front with a firm step.*

Here is he, my dear Lord

And will you please to enter — take a chair.

(*He places an arm-chair — DON GURITAN remains standing.*)

Be seated, pray; — without formality,

As if at home. I'm charm'd to see you, Sir;

There, let us chat a moment. Tell me now

What's doing in Madrid? A charming place!

I nothing know; but I suppose that still

They wonder at the Matalobos, and

The Lindamere! As for myself, I'd fear

The stealer of our hearts as peril more

Than stealer of our money bags. Oh, Sir,

The women! Sex possessed! My brain is crack'd

Where they're concern'd, they so enslave me. Speak,

And tell me what is doing now-a-days;

I am but half alive — an ox — a thing

Absurd — with nought that's human left in him,

A dead man risen, an hidalgo true

Of old Castile. They've robbed me of my plume,

And I my gloves have lost. I come from lands

Most wonderful.

DON GURITAN.

You come, dear Sir? Ah well,
I've just arrived from farther off than you!

DON CÉSAR (*brightening up*).

From what distinguished shore?

DON GURITAN.

Down yonder, in
The north.

DON CÉSAR.

And I from farther in the south.

DON GURITAN.

I'm furious!

DON CÉSAR.

Is it so? I am enraged!

DON GURITAN.

Twelve hundred leagues I've travelled!

DON CÉSAR.

I have done
Two thousand! Women fair, black, yellow, brown
I've seen. To places bless'd by heaven I've been.
Algiers the happy town, and fair Tunis
Where one may see — such pleasant ways have Turks —
People impaled hooked up above the doors.

DON GURITAN.

I have been played a trick.

DON CÉSAR.

And I've been sold.

DON GURITAN.

Almost exiled I was.

DON CÉSAR.

I almost hang'd!

DON GURITAN.

To Neubourg cunningly they sent me off,
To bear these few words written in a box:
"Keep this old fool as long as possible."

DON CÆSAR (*bursting out laughing*).
And who did this?

DON GURITAN.

But I will wring the neck
Of Cæsar de Bazan.

DON CÆSAR (*gravely*).

Ah!

DON GURITAN.

And to crown

His insolence, he just now sent to me
A lackey to excuse himself, he said,
A serving man, but I refused to see
The varlet, and I made them lock him up.
Now to the master, Cæsar de Bazan,
I come! This most audacious traitor knave!
See now, I'll kill him! Where is he?

DON CÆSAR (*still gravely*).

I'm he.

DON GURITAN.

You! — You are joking, Sir?

DON CÆSAR.

I am Don Cæsar.

DON GURITAN.

What! This again!

DON CÆSAR.

Undoubtedly again!

DON GURITAN.

Leave off this play, you greatly weary me,
E'en if you think that you are droll.

DON CÉSAR.

And you

Amuse me much. You have to me the air
Of jealousy. Exceedingly, dear Sir,
I pity you. The ills that come to us
From our own vices are more hard to bear
Than those which hap to us from others' sins.
I'd rather be — and so I've often said —
Quite poor than miserly, and be deceived
Rather than jealous. You are both. And now,
Upon my soul, I do to-night expect
Your wife.

DON GURITAN.

My wife!

DON CÉSAR.

Oh yes, your wife!

DON GURITAN.

Come now!

I am not married.

DON CÉSAR.

Yet you have stirr'd up

This riot! And you're not a married man!
For the last quarter of an hour you have
Assumed the husband's roar, or else the air
Of weeping tiger, so efficiently
That in simplicity I've given you
A heap of precious counsel seeming fit!
But if not married, why, by Hercules,
Have you thus made yourself ridiculous?

DON GURITAN.

Do you know, Sir, that you exasperate me?

DON CÉSAR.

Pooh!

DON GURITAN.

This is too much!

DON CÆSAR.

Truly?

DON GURITAN.

Oh, but you

Shall pay for this!

DON CÆSAR (*looking in a jeering manner at DON GURITAN's feet, which are covered by waves of ribbon, according to the new fashion*).

In days gone by it was
That on the head were ribbons worn. I mark
That now — and 'tis an honest mode — they're placed
Upon the boot, and feet are thus adorned.
A charming thing!

DON GURITAN.

I see that we must fight!

DON CÆSAR (*with indifference*).

You think so?

DON GURITAN.

You're not Cæsar, that concerns
Myself; but I'll commence with you.

DON CÆSAR.

Good, good!

Take care with me to finish.

DON GURITAN (*presenting one of the swords to him*).

Fop! At once.

DON CÆSAR (*taking the sword*).

Immediately. When I've a chance to fight
I do not lose it!

DON GURITAN.

Where?

DON CESAR.

Behind the wall.

This street's deserted.

DON GURITAN (*trying the point of his sword on the floor*).

As for CESAR, ah!

I'll kill him afterwards.

DON CESAR.

Indeed?

DON GURITAN.

Most surely!

DON CESAR (*also making his sword bend*).

Pshaw! One of us dead, you I then defy

To kill Don CESAR.

DON GURITAN.

Let us out!

[*They go out. The sound of their retreating steps is heard. A little concealed door opens in the right wall, and DON SALLUSTE enters by it.*]

SCENE 6.

DON SALLUSTE (*dressed in a dark green coat, almost black. He appears anxious and pre-occupied. He looks about, and listens uneasily*).

There's nought

Prepared! (*Noticing the table covered with dishes.*)

What means all this?

(*Hearing the noise of CESAR's and GURITAN's steps.*) --

What noise is that?

(*He walks about in reverie.*)

This morning Gudiel saw the Page go out

And followed him.—Unto Don Guritan

He went.—I see not Ruy Blas. This Page ——

Oh Satan! 'Tis some countermine! some word

Of faithful counsel, with the which he charged
Don Guritan for her!— And from the mutes
One can learn nothing! It is that! I had
Not counted on Don Guritan at all.

[*Enter DON CÆSAR. In his hand he carries the bare sword, which, on entering, he throws upon an arm-chair.*

SCENE 7.— DON SALLUSTE — DON CÆSAR.

DON CÆSAR (*from the threshold of the door*).
Ah, I was very sure! I see you then,
Old fiend!

DON SALLUSTE (*turning round petrified*).
Don Cæsar!

DON CÆSAR (*crossing his arms and bursting out laughing*).
You are weaving now
Some frightful scheme! But have I not disturb'd
It all just now, by sprawling heavily
Into the midst of it?

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).
Oh, all is lost!

DON CÆSAR (*laughing*).
Through all this morning have I come across
Your spider webs. Not one of all your plans
Is now unspoilt. I flung myself on them
At hazard; and the whole demolished I.
This is delightful!

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).
Demon! What can he
Have done?

DON CÆSAR (*laughing louder and louder*).
The man you sent with money-bag
For purpose that you know, to whom you know.

(*He laughs.*)

What a good joke!

DON SALLUSTE.

What then?

DON CÆSAR.

I made him drunk.

DON SALLUSTE.

About the money that he had?

DON CÆSAR.

With it

I presents made to divers persons. Well,

We all have friends.

DON SALLUSTE.

You wrongly me suspect —

DON CÆSAR (*rattling the money in his pockets*).

I first my pockets filled, you will believe.

(*Laughs again.*)

You understand? the lady!

DON SALLUSTE.

Oh!

DON CÆSAR (*remarking his anxiety*).

You know,—

[DON SALLUSTE *listens with redoubled anxiety*. DON

CÆSAR *proceeds, laughing*.

She sent an old duenna — fearful wretch,

With sprouting beard and drunkard's ruddy nose —

DON SALLUSTE.

What for?

DON CÆSAR.

To quietly inquire if it

Were true — from prudence — that Don Cæsar here

Expected her to-night —

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).
Good Heavens! (*Aloud.*)
And what

Didst thou reply?

DON CÆSAR.
My master, I said yes!
That I awaited her.

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).
It may be all
Is not yet lost!

DON CÆSAR.
And last your swordsman fine,
Your Captain, on the field he gave his name —
'Twas Guritan. (DON SALLUSTE *starts.*)
This morning prudently
He would not see the lackey that was sent
With message from Don Cæsar, and he came
To me demanding satisfaction —

DON SALLUSTE.
Well,
'And what didst thou?

DON CÆSAR.
I killed the goose-cap.

DON SALLUSTE.
Ah!
Indeed?

DON CÆSAR.
Yea, 'neath the wall he's dying now.

DON SALLUSTE.
'Art sure he'll die?

DON CÆSAR.
I fear so.

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).
Oh, again

I breathe! By Grace of heaven! nothing he
Has yet disturbed! Quite otherwise. But let me
Be rid of him, this rough assistant, now!
The money — as for that, 'tis nought. (*Aloud.*)

Your tale

Is very strange. And have you seen none else?

DON CÆSAR.

No soul. But soon I shall. I shall go on.
My name will cause sensation through the town.
I'll make a frightful scandal, you may rest
Assured.

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).

The devil!

(*Eagerly, and approaching DON CÆSAR.*)

Money you may keep,

But leave this house.

DON CÆSAR.

Ah, yes, one knows your ways;
You'd have me followed! Then I should return —
Delightful destiny — to contemplate
Thy blue, oh sea Mediterranean!
Not I.

DON SALLUSTE.

Believe me.

DON CÆSAR.

No. Besides, within

This palace-prison some one is, I feel,
A prey to your dark treachery. All plots
Of Courts have double ladders. On one side
Arms tied, and gloom, and troubled looks. By one
Ascends the suff'rer, by the other mounts
The executioner. — Now you must be
The headsman — of necessity.

DON SALLUSTE.

Oh! oh!

DON CÆSAR.

For me! I pull the ladder, and crack — down
It goes!

DON SALLUSTE.

I swear —

DON CÆSAR.

I will to spoil it all
Stay through th' adventure. Oh, I know you sharp
Enough, my subtle cousin, puppets two
Or three to hang up by one cord. Hold, now,
I'm one! and I will here remain!

DON SALLUSTE.

Hark, now —

DON CÆSAR.

To rhetoric! Ah, me you sold away
To Afric's pirates! Here you fabricate
Some Cæsar false! And thus you compromise
My name!

DON SALLUSTE.

Mere chance it was.

DON CÆSAR.

Mere chance! Excuse
That dish that rogues prepare for fools to gulp;
No chance was it. The worse for you if plans
Break through. But I intend to succour those
Whom you'd destroy. I shall cry out my name
From the house-tops.

(He climbs on the window supports and looks out.)

Now wait! Here is good luck!
The Alguazils are 'neath the window now.

*(He passes his arm through the bars and shakes them,
crying out)*

Halloa!

DON SALLUSTE (*aside, and terrified, at the front of the stage*).

All's lost if he be recognized!

[*The Alguazils enter, preceded by an Alcaid. DON SALLUSTE appears in great perplexity. DON CÆSAR goes towards the Alcaid with an air of triumph.*

SCENE 8.—THE SAME, AN ALCAID, AND THE ALGUAZILS.

DON CÆSAR (*to the Alcaid*).

You, in your warrant, will take down —

DON SALLUSTE (*pointing to DON CÆSAR*).

That this

Man is the famous robber Matalobos!

DON CÆSAR (*amazed*).

How!

DON SALLUSTE (*aside*).

All I gain, if I but gain a day.

(*To the Alcaid.*)

This man in shining daylight dares to come
Into our houses.—Seize the thief.

[*The Alguazils seize DON CÆSAR by the collar.*

DON CÆSAR (*furious, to DON SALLUSTE*).

Pardon!

You lie outrageously!

THE ALCAID.

Who was it, then,

That called us?

DON SALLUSTE.

It was I.

DON CÆSAR.

By heaven, now!

That's bold!

THE ALCAID.

Be still! I think he's right.

DON CÆSAR.

But list,

I am Don Cæsar de Bazan himself!

DON SALLUSTE.

Don Cæsar! If you please, examine now
His mantle — you will find that Salluste's writ
Beneath the collar. 'Tis a mantle which
Just now he stole from me.

[The Alguazils snatch off the mantle, and the Alcaid examines it.]

THE ALCAID.

Quite right — 'tis so.

DON SALLUSTE.

The doublet that he wears —

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).

Accursèd Salluste!

DON SALLUSTE (*continuing*).

Belongs to the Count d'Albe; it was from him
He stole it,

*(showing an escutcheon embroidered on the facing of the
left sleeve)*

And whose 'scutcheon you behold!

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).

Bewitched he must be!

THE ALCAID (*examining the blazon*).

Ah, yes — yes; here are

The castles two, in gold —

DON SALLUSTE.

Also you'll see

Two cauldrons, Henriquez and Guzman.

[In struggling, DON CÆSAR has let fall some doubloons]

from his pockets. DON SALLUSTE *points out to the*
Alcaid the manner in which they were filled.

There!

Is that the way that money's borne about
By honest men?

THE ALCAID (*shaking his head*).
Ahem!

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).
I'm caught.

THE ALCAID.

Here are

Some papers.

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).

Ah, they've found! Oh, oh, the poor
Love-letters saved through all my scrapes!

THE ALCAID (*examining the papers*).

Letters ——

What's this? — in different hands are they ——

DON SALLUSTE (*making him observe the directions*).

But all

Directed to the Count.

THE ALCAID.
Yes.

DON CÆSAR.
But ——

THE ALCAID (*tying his hands*).

Caught now!

What luck!

AN ALGUAZIL (*entering to the Alcaid*).

Outside, my Lord, a man has just
Been killed.

THE ALCAID.
Who is the murderer?

DON SALLUSTE (*pointing to DON CÆSAR*).
'Tis he.

DON CÆSAR (*aside*).
The duel! Oh, that senseless freak!

DON SALLUSTE.
Ah, when
He entered, in his hand he had a sword,
And there it is.

THE ALCAID (*examining the sword*).
And blood upon it! Ah!
(*To DON CÆSAR.*)
There — go with them.

DON SALLUSTE (*to DON CÆSAR, whom the Alguazils
are taking away*).
To Matalobos now
Good evening.

DON CÆSAR (*making a step towards him and looking at
him fixedly*).
Earth's vilest scoundrel you!

ACT FIFTH: THE TIGER AND THE LION

The same room. It is night. A lamp is on the table. At the rising of the curtain RUY BLAS is alone. He is dressed in a long black robe, which conceals his other vestments.

SCENE I.

RUY BLAS (*alone*).

'Tis ended now. The dream — the vision — all
Has passed away. All day till eve I've walked
Haphazard through the streets. Just now I've hope.
I'm calm. At night the head is less disturb'd
By noise, and one reflects the better then.
Nought too alarming in these darkened walls
I see; the furniture is 'ranged; the keys
Are in the locks; the mutes sleep overhead;
The house is truly very still. Oh yes,
There is no reason for alarm. All things
Proceed quite well. My page all faithful is.
Don Guritan is sure to stir himself
For her. Oh, God! May I not thank Thee now,
Just God, for suff'ring that advice to reach
Her ears. Thou, gracious God, hast aided me,
'Tis Thou hast helped me to protect and save
This angel, and defeat Don Salluste. Oh
May she have nought to fear, and nought, alas,
To suffer; and may she be ever saved!
And oh, that I may die!

[He draws from his bosom a little vial which he places on the table.]

Yes, perish now,
Despised! and sink into the grave! Yes, die

As one should die, who seeks to expiate
A crime! Die in this dwelling, wretched, vile,
And alone!

[He throws open the black robe, under which is seen the livery which he wore in the first act.]

Die with thy livery beneath
Thy winding-sheet! Oh, if the demon comes
To see his victim dead,

[He pushes a piece of furniture to barricade the secret door.]

he shall at least

Not enter by this horrid door! *[He comes back to the table.]*
'Tis sure

The Page has spoken to Don Guritan.

It was not eight o'clock this morn. *[He gazes on the vial.]*
For me

I have condemned myself, and now prepare

My execution,—on my head I shall

Myself let fall the tomb's so heavy lid.

At least I have the comfort certainly

To know there is no help. My fall must be.

[Sinking into the arm-chair.]

And yet she loved me! Oh God, help me now!

I've not the courage!

[He weeps.]

Oh! he might in peace

Have left us! *[He hides his face in his hands and sobs.]*

Oh, my God!

[Raising his head, as if distraught, and looking at the vial.]

The man who sold

Me this asked me what day o' the month it was.

I could not tell. My head's confused. Oh, men

Are cruel. You may die, and none will care.

I suffer.—Me she loved!—To know things past

Can never be restored! And to behold

Her nevermore! Her hand that I have press'd!

Her lips that touch'd my brow —— Angel adored!

Poor angel! There is need to die, and die
Despairing! Oh, her dress, the folds of which
Each one had grace, her footstep that had power
To stir my soul when it pass'd by, her eyes
That did intoxicate mine own still all
Irresolute, her smile, her voice —— and I
Shall see her, hear her never more. Is this
Then possible? Oh, never!

[In anguish he stretches out his hand to the vial; at the moment when he seizes it convulsively the door at the back opens. The QUEEN appears dressed in white, with a dark mantle, the hood of which having fallen back on her shoulders, shows her pale face. She carries in her hand a dark lantern which she places on the floor and walks rapidly towards RUY BLAS.]

SCENE 2.— RUY BLAS — THE QUEEN.

THE QUEEN (*entering*).

Don Cæsar!

RUY BLAS (*turning round with a frightened gesture, and closing hurriedly the robe which had hidden his livery*).

Oh God! 'tis she! In a most horrid snare
She's taken. (*Aloud.*) Madam! ——

THE QUEEN.

Cæsar! What a cry

Of fright ——

RUY BLAS.

Who was it told you to come here?

THE QUEEN.

Thyself.

RUY BLAS.

Oh, how?

THE QUEEN.

I have received from you ——

RUY BLAS (*breathless*).

Speak, quick!

THE QUEEN.

A note.

RUY BLAS.

From me!

THE QUEEN.

By your own hand

Indited.

RUY BLAS.

This is but to dash one's brow
Against the wall! But oh, I have not writ —
Of that I'm very sure!

THE QUEEN (*drawing from her bosom a letter, which she gives him*).

Read — read it then.

[RUY BLAS *takes the letter eagerly, and bends towards the lamp to read it*].

RUY BLAS (*reading*).

“A danger terrible environs me;

My Queen alone can stay the tempest's force ——

[*He looks at the letter as if in a stupor and unable to read further.*]

THE QUEEN (*continuing, and pointing with her finger to the lines as she reads*).

“By coming to my house this night. If not,
I'm lost.”

RUY BLAS (*in a stifled voice*).

What treason! Oh, that letter!

THE QUEEN (*continuing to read*).

“Come

To the door that's at the end of th' Avenue;
At night you'll not be recognized. And one
Who is devoted will be there to ope
The door."

RUY BLAS (*aside*).

This note I had forgotten.

[*To the QUEEN, in a terrible voice.*

Go

Away!

THE QUEEN.

I'll go, Don Caesar. You are cruel!
My God! What have I done?

RUY BLAS.

Good heavens! What?
You ruin and destroy yourself!

THE QUEEN.

But how?

RUY BLAS.

Explain I cannot. Fly — fly quick.

THE QUEEN.

This morn

I for your safety did precaution take,
And a duenna sent ——

RUY BLAS.

Oh, God! but now

As from a heart that bleeds, I feel your life
In streams is running out.— Go — go!

THE QUEEN (*as if struck by a sudden idea*).

Inspired

I am by that devotion which my love
Suggests. Oh, you approach some dreadful hour,
And would remove me from the danger now!
But I remain!

RUY BLAS.

Oh, what sublimity!

What thoughtfulness! — Oh God! to thus remain
At such an hour in such a place!

THE QUEEN.

From you

The letter really came. And thus ——

RUY BLAS (*raising his arms to heaven in despair*).

Oh Power

Divine!

THE QUEEN.

You wish me gone.

RUY BLAS (*taking her hands*).

Oh, understand!

THE QUEEN.

I do. Upon the moment's spur you wrote,
And after ——

RUY BLAS.

Unto thee I have not writ.

I am a demon. Fly! Ah it is thou,
Poor child, who lead'st thyself into the snare!
Ah, it is true, and hell on every side
Besieges thee! Then nothing can I find
That will persuade thee? Listen — understand;
I love thee well, thou know'st. To save thy mind
From what is imaged, I would pluck my heart
From out my body. Go thou!

THE QUEEN.

Don Cæsar ——

RUY BLAS.

Go — go. But I remember, some one must
Have opened to you?

THE QUEEN.

Yes.

RUY BLAS.

Oh Satan! Who?

THE QUEEN.

One in a mask — and hidden by the wall.

RUY BLAS.

What said the man? what was his figure — say?

Oh, was he tall? Who was he? Speak, I wait!

[A man in black, and masked, appears at the door at the back.]

THE MASKED MAN.

'Twas I.

[He takes off his mask. It is DON SALLUSTE. The QUEEN and RUY BLAS recognize him with terror.]

SCENE 3.— THE SAME, DON SALLUSTE.

RUY BLAS.

Great God! Fly, Madam, fly!

DON SALLUSTE.

There is

No longer time. Madam de Neubourg now
Has ceased to be the Queen of Spain.

THE QUEEN (*horrified*).

Don Salluste!

DON SALLUSTE (*pointing to RUY BLAS*).

That man's companion you henceforth must be.

THE QUEEN.

Great God! ah yes, it is indeed a snare!

Don Cæsar —

RUY BLAS (*despairingly*).

Madam, what alas, is it

You've done?

DON SALLUSTE (*moving slowly towards the QUEEN*).

I hold you here.— But I will speak
Without offence unto your Majesty,
For without wrath am I.— I find you here —
Now listen, do not let us make a stir —
At midnight, in Don Cæsar's room alone.
This fact, if public — for a queen — would be
Enough at Rome the marriage to annul.
And promptly would the Holy Father be
Informed of it.— But by consent the thing
Could be concealed.

[*He draws from his pocket a parchment, which he unrolls and presents to the QUEEN.*

Sign me this letter then
Unto His Majesty our King. I will
Send it by hand of the grand equerry
To the chief notary, and afterwards —
A carriage, where I've placed a heap of gold
(*Pointing outside.*)

Is there — set out the two of you at once.
I help you. Be not anxious, you can go
Toledo way by Alcantare — so
Reach Portugal. Go where you will — to us
It is the same. We'll shut our eyes.— Obey.
I swear that I alone as yet am 'ware
Of the adventure; but if you refuse,
Madrid to-morrow shall know everything.
Let us be calm. I hold you in my hand.

[*Pointing to the table on which is an ink-stand.*
Madam, for writing, what you need is there.

THE QUEEN (*overwhelmed, falling into an arm-chair*).
I'm in his power.

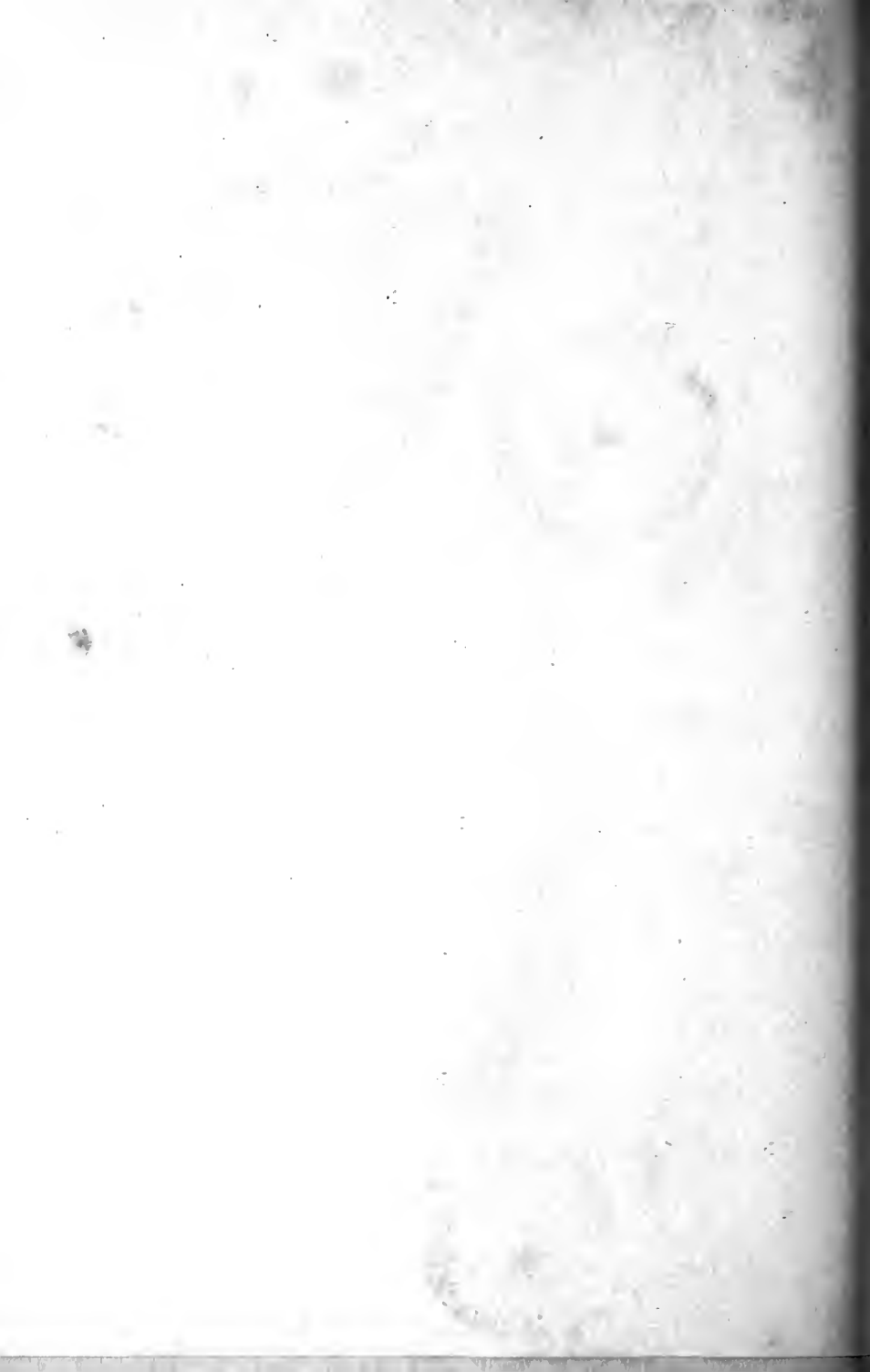
DON SALLUSTE.

From you I only ask
This acquiescence signed, for me to send
To the king.



Don Salluste "There now!
What is a crown? You happiness will gain,
Though you may lose a throne."

Dramas. Ruy Blas: Act V., Sc., III, Page 425.



[*Whispering to RUY BLAS, who listens motionless and thunderstruck.*

Let me alone, it is for thee
I work. (*To the QUEEN.*) Sign now.

THE QUEEN (*aside, trembling*).

What can I do?

DON SALLUSTE (*leaning over her, whispering in her ear, and presenting a pen*).

There now!

What is a crown? You happiness will gain,
Though you may lose a throne. My people all
Remain outside. They nothing know of this,
All passes here between us three.

[*Trying to put the pen between the QUEEN'S fingers, she neither taking nor rejecting it.*

Well now,

[*The QUEEN, distraught and undecided, looks at him with anguish.*

If you sign not you strike the blow yourself —
The scandal and the cloister!

THE QUEEN (*overwhelmed*).

Oh, my God!

DON SALLUSTE (*pointing to RUY BLAS*).

Don Cæsar loves you. He is worthy you;
Upon my honour he is nobly born;
Almost a prince. Lord of a donjon keep
With walls embattled, holding fee of lands,
He is the Duke d'Olmedo — Count Bazan,
Grandee of Spain —

[*He pushes to the parchment the hand of the QUEEN, who, trembling and dismayed, seems ready to sign.*

RUY BLAS (*as if suddenly awakening*).

My name is Ruy Blas,

And I a lackey am!

[*Snatching the pen from the hand of the QUEEN, and the parchment, which he tears.*

Madam, sign not! —

At last! — I suffocate!

THE QUEEN.

Oh, what says he?

Don Cæsar!

RUY BLAS (*letting his robe fall, and showing himself in livery without a sword*).

Yes, my name is RUY BLAS.

I am the servant of that man! (*Turning to DON SALLUSTE.*)

I say

There's been enough of treason, and that I
Refuse my happiness! — Oh thanks! — You thought
That you did well to whisper in my ear!
I say that it is time, that I at last
Should waken, though I'm strangled in your web
Of hideous plots — and I no further step
Will go. I say we two together make,
My Lord, a pair that's infamous. I have
The clothing of a lackey — you the soul!

DON SALLUSTE (*to the QUEEN coldly*).

This man indeed my servant is.

(*To RUY BLAS, with authority.*)

Not one

Word more.

THE QUEEN (*letting a cry of despair escape her, and wringing her hands*).

Just heav'n!

DON SALLUSTE (*continuing*).

Only he spoke too soon.

[*He crosses his arms, and holds himself up, speaking with a voice of thunder.*

Well — yes! now 'tis for me to tell it all.

It matters not, my vengeance in its way
Is all complete.

(*To the QUEEN.*)

What think you? On my word,
Madrid will laugh! You ruined me! and you
I have dethroned. You banished me, and now
I boast of driving you away. * Ha, ha!
You offered me for wife your waiting-maid!

(*Bursting into laughter.*)

My lackey I for lover give to you.
You can espouse him certainly. The King
Sinks fast! — A lover's heart will be your wealth.

(*He laughs.*)

You will have made him Duke, that you might be
His Duchess!

(*Grinding his teeth.*)

Ah, you blighted, ruined me,
And trampled me beneath your feet, and yet —
And yet you slept in peace! Fool that you were!

[*Whilst he has been speaking, RUY BLAS has gone to the door at the back and fastened it; then he has approached him by soft steps from behind, without having been perceived. At the moment when DON SALLUSTE finishes, fixing his eyes full of hatred and triumph on the annihilated QUEEN, RUY BLAS seizes the sword of the MARQUIS by the hilt, and draws it out swiftly.*]

RUY BLAS (*with the sword of DON SALLUSTE in his hand*).
I say you have insulted now your Queen!

[DON SALLUSTE *rushes towards the door. RUY BLAS bars the way.*]

— Oh, go not there! 'tis not worth while; long since
I fastened it. Marquis, until to-day,
Satan protected thee; but if he will
From my hands pluck thee, let him show himself.
— 'Tis my turn now! — When we a serpent meet,

It must be crush'd. No one can enter here.
 No, not thy people, and not hell. Beneath
 Mine iron heel I hold thee foaming now!
 — This man spoke insolently to you, Madam!
 I will explain. He has no human soul.
 A monster he. With jibings yesterday
 He suffocated me. He crush'd my heart,
 For his mere pleasure. Oh, he bade me close
 A window, and he martyriz'd me then!
 I prayed — I wept — I cannot tell you all.

(*To the MARQUIS.*)

In these last moments you have counted o'er
 Your wrongs. I shall not answer your complaints.
 Besides, I comprehend them not. But you,
 Oh wretch! you dare your Queen to outrage now
 — Woman adorable — whilst I am by!
 Hold! for a clever man, in truth you much
 Astonish me! And you imagine, too,
 That I shall see you do it, and say nought!
 But listen, — whatsoe'er his sphere, my Lord,
 When a vile, trait'rous, tortuous scoundrel strange
 And monstrous acts commits, noble or churl,
 All men have right, in coming on his path,
 To splutter out his sentence to his face,
 And take a sword, a knife, a hatchet — Oh,
 By Heav'n! to be a lackey! When I should
 The headsman be!

THE QUEEN.

You do not mean to kill

This man?

RUY BLAS.

Madam, I am ashamed, indeed,
 That I my duty must accomplish here;
 But this affair must all be stifled now.

(*He pushes DON SALLUSTE towards the closet.*)

'Tis settled. Go you there, my Lord, and pray.

DON SALLUSTE.

It is assassination.

RUY BLAS.

Think you so?

DON SALLUSTE (*unarmed, and looking around him with rage*).

Nothing upon these walls! No arms!

(*To RUY BLAS.*)

A sword,

At least!

RUY BLAS.

Marquis, you jest! What! Master! is 't

That I'm a gentleman? a duel! fie!

One of thy servants am I, in galloon

And red, a knave to be chastised and whipp'd,

And one who kills! Yes, I shall kill you, Sir ——

Believe you it? — as villain infamous!

As craven! as a dog!

THE QUEEN.

Have mercy on him!

RUY BLAS (*to the QUEEN, and seizing the MARQUIS*).

Madam, each one takes vengeance for himself.

The demon cannot any longer be

Saved by an Angel!

THE QUEEN (*kneeling*).

Mercy!

DON SALLUSTE (*calling for help*).

Murder! help!

RUY BLAS (*raising the sword*).

How soon will you have done?

DON SALLUSTE (*throwing himself on RUY BLAS*).

Demon! I die

By murder!

RUY BLAS (*pushing him into the closet*).

No, in rightful punishment!

[*They disappear in the cabinet, the door of which closes on them.*]

THE QUEEN (*alone, and falling half dead into the arm-chair*).
Oh heavens!

[*A moment of silence. RUY BLAS re-enters, pale, and without the sword.*]

SCENE 4.—THE QUEEN — RUY BLAS.

RUY BLAS *totters a few steps towards the QUEEN, who remains motionless and as if frozen. Then he falls on both knees, his eyes fixed on the ground, as if he dared not raise them to her.*

RUY BLAS (*in a grave low voice*).

Now, Madam, must I speak to you.

But I will not come near. I frankly speak.

I'm not as guilty as you think I am.

I know my treason, as to you it seems,

Must horrible appear. Oh, to explain

It is not easy. Yet not base my soul,—

At heart I'm honest. 'Tis this love which has

Destroyed me. Not that I defend myself,

For well I know I should have found some means

T' escape. The sin is consummated now!

But all the same, I've loved you truly well.

THE QUEEN.

Sir —

RUY BLAS (*still on his knees*).

Fear not. I will not approach. Yet would

I to your Majesty from step to step

The whole declare. Believe I am not vile!

To-day — all day I paced about the town

Like one possessed. Often the people looked
At me. And near the 'spital that by you
Was founded, vaguely did I feel, athwart
My brain delirious, that silently
A woman of the crowd did wipe away
The sweat from off my brow. Have mercy, God!
My heart is broken!

THE QUEEN.

What is't that you wish?

RUY BLAS (*joining his hands*).

That, Madam, you would pardon me!

THE QUEEN.

Never.

RUY BLAS.

Never! [*He rises, and walks slowly towards the table.*
Very sure?

THE QUEEN.

No, never — never!

RUY BLAS (*he takes the vial that was placed on the table,
carries it to his lips, and empties it at one draught*).
Sad flame, extinguished be!

THE QUEEN (*rising and rushing to him*).

What have you done?

RUY BLAS (*showing the vial*).

Nothing. My woes are ended. Nothing. You
Curse me — and I bless you. There — that is all.

THE QUEEN (*overcome*).

Don Cæsar!

RUY BLAS.

When I think, poor angel, that
You loved me!

THE QUEEN.

Oh, what was that philtre strange?

What have you done? Speak — answer — tell to me.
I do forgive and love thee, Cæsar. I
Believe in thee.

RUY BLAS.

My name is Ruy Blas.

THE QUEEN (*throwing her arms around him*).
I do forgive thee, Ruy Blas. But speak,
Say what it is you've done? 'Tis my command!
That frightful draught — it was not poison? Say?

RUY BLAS.

Yes; it was poison. But my heart is glad.

[*Holding the QUEEN in his arms and raising his eyes to heaven.*

Permit, oh God,— the Sovereign Justice Thou —
That the poor lackey pours out blessings on
This Queen, who did console his tortured heart
By — in his life — her love, and pity gives
In death.

THE QUEEN.

Poison! Oh God! 'tis I — 'tis I
Have killed thee! Ah, I love thee! If I had
But pardoned!

RUY BLAS (*sinking*).

I had done the same.

[*His voice fails. The QUEEN supports him.*

I could

No longer live! Adieu! (*Pointing to the door.*)

Fly hence, and all

Will secret be. I die. (*He falls.*)

THE QUEEN (*throwing herself on his body*).

RUY BLAS!

RUY BLAS (*at the point of death, rousing himself at his name pronounced by the QUEEN*).

I thank thee!







